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Mass Murder in Ain al-Hilweh

Israeli army troops blew up eight houses, killing and wounding 40 Palestinians May 16, and arrested over 100 residents of the Ain al-Hilweh refugee camp near Sidon, south Lebanon, according to wire service reports from *Agence France Presse*, *Associated Press* and Lebanon Radio.

At least one more Palestinian, a 30-year-old woman, was killed the following day when Israeli troops broke into the refugee camp again. Israeli reports claim the army was searching for weapons.

A French news agency report from Lebanon quoted camp residents as saying that the camp was awakened in the middle of the night to sounds of tanks and explosions. Residents said that after the camp was sealed, jeeps full of Israelis carried out a thorough search of the camp and arrested about 100 residents. According to the reports, the operation ended at 4:00 am and the siege was lifted.

Camp residents said militias supported by Israel broke into the Ghassan Kanafani Child Care Centre completely wrecking it.

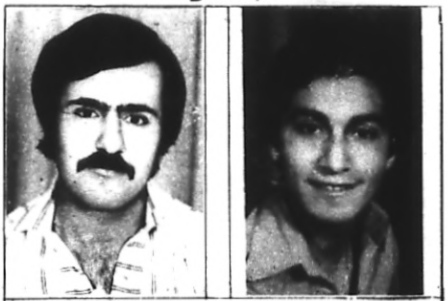
One resident who received two bullet wounds and had a number of bones broken spoke from Sidon's Hamuda Hospital to an *AFP* correspondent. Calling the events a night of fear, he said: "I was sleeping in my house in the camp when I heard explosions at the rate of five-per-minute. Suddenly the door of my house was blown up and I found 10 soldiers in front of me. The soldiers opened fire at me without saying a word and I woke up in the hospital."

Another women, 34 years old, said she heard the sound of tanks and shooting. When she opened her door she was shot and soldiers entered her house, tearing it apart while she lay on

continued on page 2

Palestinian children on stage for the opening of a conference held May 13-15 in Jerusalem on the condition of the Palestinian child. The conference was sponsored by the Union of Charitable Societies in the West Bank (see story page 13) /AO photo

Al Fajr Workers Beaten by Troops



Al Fajr **workers Izhaq Qawasmeh, Riyad Ramouni, Mohammed Qumboz and Jamal Khatib were arrested and beaten by Israeli soldiers May 12.**

After 20 hours of beatings and interrogation, four *Al Fajr* workers were released on bail May 12. The four workers were arrested near a crossroads heading to Idna village, 20 kilometres south of Hebron, on their way to Gaza to distribute the newspaper. Soldiers destroyed 1200 copies of *Al Fajr* daily and accused the four of carrying a Palestinian flag and a toy gun.

Guerrillas Killed in Hebron Area Raid

Two Palestinian commandos were killed in a clash with Israeli troops in the hills near Idna village, Hebron district, May 11 with no confirmation of Israeli casualties. Israel TV reported that the commandos entered the West Bank from the Jordan River. Their identity has not been revealed.

An Israeli military spokesperson said that a clash with commandos occurred on Friday night, around 11:00 pm, when an Israeli patrol ran in the way of a two-man unit near the village of Idna, 10 kilometres west of Hebron. The commandos opened fire with automatic weapons after the soldiers ordered them to identify themselves. The Israeli spokesperson claimed that the two commandos were killed instantly. Although the spokesperson denied casualties on the Israeli side, eyewitnesses reported seeing at least five ambulances heading towards the area of the clash, followed by troop reinforcements. Israeli troops later placed the nearby villages of Idna and Tarqoumia under curfew and interrogated a number of residents.

Israeli military sources claimed that the two commandos had apparently infiltrated from Jordan for the purpose of carrying out attacks against Israeli targets. The sources said the commandos were carrying two automatic guns, a handgun, four hand grenades and two pocket-knives. They also carried maps of the area in Arabic and English. The sources speculated that the commandos may have been on their way to either of two nearby settlements, Aroram or Telem.

continued on page 4

Phalangists Get Diplomatic Status in J'lem

The 'Lebanese Forces,' which are dominated by the Phalangists, opened a mission in Jerusalem with diplomatic status May 17. The office opening was timed to the first anniversary of the Israeli-Lebanese agreement.

The Israeli mayor of West Jerusalem, Teddy Kollek, invited the Phalangist representative to a party to mark the opening of the office.

The new office replaced the temporary mission which the Lebanese Front maintained for the past few months at the Hilton Hotel in West Jerusalem. That office did not have any diplomatic status, although it enjoyed special privileges.

A full report follows on page 16.

IN THIS ISSUE

Mass for Hanna Moqbil p.2
Elections at Bethlehem University p.3
Life sentence for two sheikhs. p.4
Arabs must wake up. p.5
Arens: we can deal with minorities p.6
Terror p.7
The deal for lives and the Zionist scheme ..... pp.8&9
Racism and murder p.10
Symposium on the siege of Beirut. p.11
Window on the Arab press. p.12
Jerusalem *mufti* demands Israeli troops out of al-Aqsa . p.13
Phalangists' official status in Jerusalem p.16

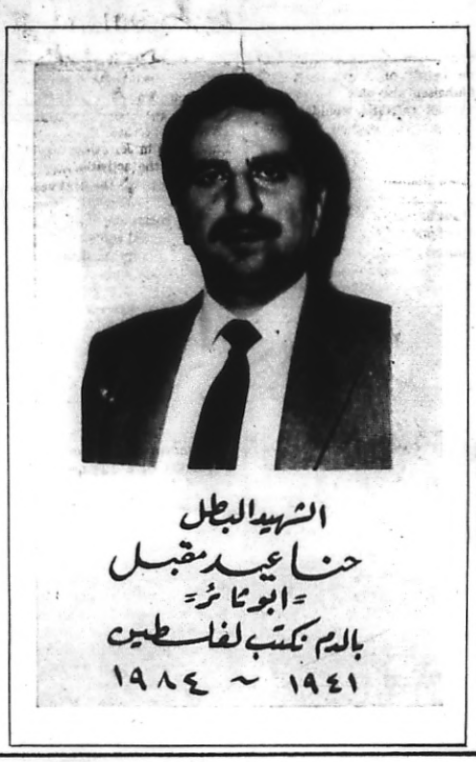
Symbolic Funeral for Slain Journalist

JERUSALEM — A memorial service was held May 6 for assassinated Palestinian journalist Hanna Moqbil in his West Bank hometown of Taibeh, near Ramallah. Several hundred people from the occupied territories marched in the funeral procession and mourners shouldered an empty coffin draped with the four-coloured Palestinian flag. Memorial services were held earlier in the village's Catholic church. The procession moved through the village streets as marchers carried Palestinian flags, scout bands played funeral music and chanters called for national unity.

The funeral march ended in an eulogy to Moqbil at the village cemetery, where a stone memorial had been constructed. Representatives from Taibeh, relatives of Moqbil, the Union of Construction Workers in Ramallah and Voluntary Work Committees spoke at the services. The speakers praised the role of Moqbil in the Palestinian and Arab journalists unions.

A Catholic mass, attended by several hundred villagers, was held in his honour on May 13.

Moqbil, head of the Arab Journalists' Union and a prominent Palestinian writer, was shot dead in Nicosia May 4 by an unknown assailant. An investigation into his death has been undertaken.



BZU Workers Laud Unity Moves

The Workers and Employees Union at Bir Zeit University issued a statement May 15 saluting the meeting between leaders of the Palestinian factions in Algiers. The statement called on the participants to reconcile the differences in the Palestinian arena and to preserve the unity of the PLO and its independent national decision-making on the basis of the PNC resolutions, especially those of the sixteenth session in Algiers, February 1983.

The workers' statement called on the participants to consolidate and deepen the roots of collective leadership and to spread democratic methods of dealing within all the PLO institutions. It also called on the participants to confront any attempt which suspects the PLO's legitimacy and sole nature of representation or the participation in representation regarding the Palestinian people all over the world.

Optimism For Unity At Algiers

Yasir Abed Rabbo, Khalil Wazir, Salah Khalaf and George Habash were among the Palestinian leaders at a May 14 meeting in Algiers to form a unified stand prior to convening the PNC.

After a 48-hour delay, leaders of the top four Palestinian factions met in Algiers May 14 in an attempt to clear the way for a unified Palestinian stand prior to the convening of the next Palestine National Council. No details of the meeting were released.

Participants at the Algiers meeting included deputies to the secretaries-general of: the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Abu Ali Mustafa; the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Yasir Abed Rabbo; the Palestinian Communist Party, Suleiman Najjab; and Fatah deputy, Khalil Wazir (Abu Jihad). Press reports from Algiers said that Algerian and Democratic Yemen representatives attended the meetings.

Little news of the content of the meetings leaked out but Palestinian leaders were said to be optimistic. Local papers gave top coverage to statements attributed to Salah Khalaf (Abu Iyad), speaking from Kuwait, who said conditions for reconciliation at the Algiers conference are ripe and that the Palestinian revolution is much better off than before.

Israeli Killed, 2 Wounded in South Lebanon Guerrilla Operations

An Israeli lieutenant was killed and three other Israelis, including one civilian, were wounded in military attacks waged by the Lebanese national resistance forces in South Lebanon during the last week. This boosted the Israeli casualties since the invasion, according to the official count, to 580 dead and 3382 wounded.

Israeli troops, on the other hand, killed and wounded more than 40 Palestinian and Lebanese civilians during search and destroy campaigns on South Lebanon refugee camps and villages (see separate story on the Israeli raid on Ain al-Hilweh).

The Israeli officer was killed on Friday morning, May 11, in a grenade attack in Nabatiyeh. Israeli military sources said that commandos ambushed a convoy in central Nabatiyeh, killing the officer instantly. Another person, an Israeli contractor employed by the Israeli army, was wounded in the attack.

Israeli troop reinforcements, which were summoned to the scene, opened fire in the direction of the house from which the attack was launched. The army later demolished the house.

In another event on the same day, Israeli troops raided the village of Ma'arakeh, south of Tyre, with the aim of making arrests. Village residents confronted the raiding troops with stones. The army responded by firing at the protesters, injuring at least one person.

The *Voice of Lebanon* radio station reported that UNIFIL forces intervened on behalf of the residents and arranged that the Israeli army leave the village.

In another attack, May 15, two Israeli soldiers were seriously wounded north of the Zahrani River after they came under light arms fire. The soldiers were evacuated to hospital. Meanwhile, the Israeli army combed the area in a search for the attackers but did not arrest anybody.

Meanwhile, the Israeli-backed south Lebanon army, which has been deploying in south Lebanon cities in place of the Israelis, suffered its first casualty in weeks May 16. Nationalist commandos attacked a position near the village of Yater, five kilometres from the border with Israel, killing one soldier and wounding another.

On the other hand, Israeli troops shot and killed a Lebanese civilian May 12 as he approached a checkpost on the southern outskirts of Sidon.

Among other military attacks which were acknowledged by the Israeli spokespersons, an Israeli convoy came under light arms fire May 14 as they drove near the village of Ansar. Israel Radio, which reported the incident, said that there were no casualties.

In Sidon a grenade exploded near an Israeli patrol May 14 without causing any damage.

One day earlier the Israeli army surrounded the village of Nmairiyeh, in the Zahrani area, and conducted a search. Foreign reporters said that the army confiscated the ID cards of 20 residents and ordered them to appear at the military compound.

continued from page 1

Ain al-Hilweh

the floor.

Israeli military sources deny the international press reports, saying that only two Palestinians were injured during a search for weapons. Military sources said that they have asked journalists to visit the camp and see for themselves.

A source at the Jerusalem office of *AFP* told *Al Fajr* they received their reports from Israeli sources in south Lebanon but that they are now convinced of the Israeli army version. "It is possible militias might have carried out the atrocities," the source said.

In a telex from Vienna UNRWA Commissioner-General Olof Rydbeck, "expressed alarm at the course of events in Ain al-Hilweh." The UNRWA press release said that three refugees were taken to hospital and 20 received minor wounds.

In Ain al-Hilweh May 17 camp residents came out in a powerful demonstration protesting the Israeli actions. Paris-based *Monte Carlo Radio* said that the Israeli-backed national guards clashed with camp residents in an attempt to crush the protest action.

THIS WEEK'S CENSORSHIP

Following is a breakdown of censorship cuts for issue 211, May 18, 1984:

Number of original articles submitted to censors	14
Number of articles totally censored out	2
Number of articles mutilated beyond use	3
Number of articles partially censored but used	1
Number of articles passed	8

Progressives Win Bethlehem U. Poll

In a close race, a coalition of three student blocs, the 'Students Progressive Front Bloc,' won eight of nine student council seats at Bethlehem University in the annual elections held May 9. The Youth Bloc trailed by less than 30 votes in the contest but won only one seat in the final tally.

After announcement of the results, SPF supporters celebrated on campus and then marched through Bethlehem and neighbouring Beit Sahour. In their speeches, supporters of the victorious bloc stressed the necessity to maintain student unity in order to serve the student movement.

Mousa Darwish, head of the Bethlehem University public relations office, said that the elections were held in a spirit of freedom of expression and democracy. Darwish pointed out that the student council's purpose is to serve all students and not only those who elected it.

Tawfiq Muhaisen, the newly elected treasurer, promised, "We will find the appropriate means to develop the student fund. The student council is committed to paying tuition fees on behalf of needy students." Muhaisen also said the student council cafetaria would be improved. The council members-elect are:

Jabra Shamali
Mohammed Manasra
Huda Shrouf
Tawfiq Muhaisen
Ahmad Ftaiha, Cultural Club
Sami Hamdan, Social Club
Yasir Breigith, Popular Heritage Club
Abdullah Hodali, Athletic Club
Hamed Adhami, Arts Club

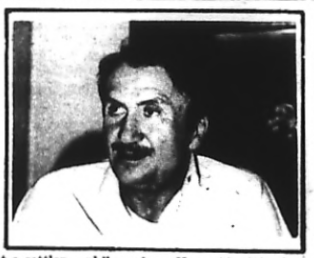
Painter Jailed... for Painting

Popular Palestinian artist Fathi Ghabin, from Jabalya refugee camp in Gaza, was sentenced to six months imprisonment and fined IS30,000 May 9 on a charge of 'incitement through his paintings.'

Ghabin, 37 and father of five children, was taken from the Gaza military court building directly to prison. The court rejected the lawyer's appeal to allow his client one week in order to make arrangements for the fine and for financial support for his family. The court gave him one month to pay the fine or one month additional imprisonment.

"Nationality," a painting by Gaza artist Fathi Ghabin

Shaka'a Exposes Attempted Frame-Up



Bassam Shaka'a, the dismissed mayor of Nablus, the biggest West Bank town, revealed new information regarding the June 1980 assassination attempts against him, Karim Khalaf and Ibrahim Tawil, the mayors of Ramallah and al-Bireh.

In a press release issued on May 9, Shaka'a said that two Arab collaborators visited him in June 1980 prior to the bombing and claimed that they were members of Fatah and were responsible for the May attack on Hebron settlers. They asked Shaka'a for help to leave the country.

Bassam Shaka'a said the Israeli authorities are "directly or indirectly" responsible for the assassination attempt. Speaking to the press May 7 he said that the authorities brought a settler to his house to reconstruct the bomb planting.

Shaka'a told *Al Fajr*, "They came when I was out of my house, at 9:20 pm. Two soldiers and a tall, bearded settler wearing a skull cap attempted to get into the house. My son, Haytham, protested and immediately called me. When I arrived, soldiers stopped me 30 metres from my house. I protested and went on on crutches. I saw the settler crouching and pointing underneath my car, indicating where he planted the bomb in June 1980.

Shaka'a told *Al Fajr* that the attack on himself and his colleagues is directly or indirectly connected with the occupation philosophy. He said, "A day before the assassination attempt, a rumour spread around town that a bomb would be planted in my vehicle. After the incident, Israelis removed traces of footprints of those who planted bombs and did not check for the fingerprints of the criminals."

The Jenin military governor threatened several mayors that they would be punished "in a similar way to what happened to Bassam Shaka'a and Karim Khalaf," Shaka'a said.

Shaka'a pointed out that since the attack, there has been a permanent patrol by soldiers on his house. "They constantly harass my visitors," he said. (Translation: Al Ittihad, May 13, 1984)

WWC Critiques Year's Achievements at Third Annual Meet

Under the slogan "Towards a Unified Popular Women's Movement' the Women's Work Committee in the occupied territories (WWC) held their third general conference in Jerusalem May 11 to review the activities over the year and plan for the next year.

The conference affirmed that the social liberation of women is essential and underscored women's role in the struggle for national liberation.

The 150 delegates from 40 branches throughout the West Bank and Gaza elected a secretariat to direct the conference at the opening session. Kamle Kurdi was elected as chairperson, Fadwa Labadi and Amal Ju'beh as deputies. Salwa Abu Daba'at and Samar Shunnar were elected as members of the secretariat. Discussion of a 12-page report presented by the general secretariat of the WWC on activities in the past year was the central item at the conference. Zahira Kamal, the executive office secretary of the WWC, outlined the social and cultural activities of WWC branches. The report listed the 38 training courses in weaving, knitting, needlework, straw weaving, pottery and first aid the committee has run.

Zahira Kamal reported that the WWC currently runs 13 permanent embroidery centres, seven wool work centres, three straw weaving shops and three crochet workshops.

She said that in the field of health the WWC now runs four clinics in the Hebron, Ramallah, Nablus and Tulkarm areas. They also run eight kindergartens and two baby-minding centres, the executive reported.

The General Committee reported on WWC activities in solidarity with political prisoners, visits and grants to prisoners' families.

During the conference, the chairperson read messages of solidarity from various local national institutions, particularly trade unions and national figures. Each message was received with a storm of applause.

Letters of solidarity were also received from Siham Barghouthi, a political prisoner in Neve Tertza prison, Ramleh, and from Hatem Shunnar from Asqalan prison. Siham is a founding member of the Women's Work Committee.

The conference ended with a final statement which condemned the attempts to drag the PLO into a US-sponsored political settlement and the Jordanian attempts to by-pass the PLO through reviving the Jordanian parliament.

The statement, which was read aloud by one of the conference directors, also praised the efforts to reconcile differences within the PLO, especially the Algiers meeting which was attended by the joint PFLP-DFLP leadership and the central committee of Fatah, and urged greater commitment to democratic dialogue and called for collective leadership of PLO institutions.

Three other women's committees in the occupied territories, the Union of Palestinian Women's Committees, the Working Women's Committees, and the Women's Committee for Social Action, were not invited to the conference, despite the high level of coordination of activities between them.

Amal Ju'beh explained that the WWC had planned to invite the other groups but the invitations were not delivered for technical reasons.

The Women's Work Committees, the first and largest popular organisation for women, were founded in 1978 in Ramallah and Jerusalem. The committees have more than 2300 members.

They held their first conference in 1980.

In the course of evaluating the previous year's activities, the Women's Work Committees demonstrated rigorous but constructive self-criticism during the conference. The general report to the conference contained two pages detailing the areas which need improvement.

The report categorised the problems as internal and external. For the internal factors, the report said that some of the village branches are built on a weak basis. "The greater error is that weak branches are incorporated in the regional committee without strengthening its base," the report said.

Likewise, the report said that in some branches, women cadres carry out the activities that members of the branch are supposed to carry out. As a solution, they recommend that all members be involved in all activities.

One of the most serious criticisms was that some branches exist only during festivals and celebrations. The report strongly attacked this phenomenon and urged a stronger adherence to the internal work regulations of the committee. The report also criticised some branches, without naming them, for not implementing the programme schemes and training courses for organising women in the committees. They also criticised the inefficient supervision of the regional committees over village branches. The committee's report also listed the external factors which stand as an obstacle to the progress of the committees. Among these problems:

1) Social and cultural restrictions, which prevent women from getting involved with such activities;

2) The occupation authorities' harassment, especially the raids and arrests in some branches, which scare away other members;

3) The lack of permanent offices in some places, particularly in Jabalya and Shate' (Beach) camps in Gaza. The report also listed the problem of finances and the lack of a constant source of income, which constitute another problem for the committees.

Sheikhs Get Life For Guerrilla Operations

Mohammed Muhsen

Lydda military court sentenced two Muslim sheikhs, Mohammed Shehadeh Muhsen, 29, and his cousin Bakr Mohammed Muhsen, 30, both from Abu Dis, to life imprisonment May 8 on charges of membership in an illegal organisation "and participating in 15 military operations against Israel between 1975 and 1979.

there were 68 dead and injured from the operations.

Levinger Held in 'TNT' Swoop

One of the West Bank's most notorious settlers, Rabbi Moshe Levinger, was detained by Israeli police May 13 for questioning on his part in "Terror Against Terror' attacks on Palestinians.

Levinger, 48, is being interrogated about allegations that he had foreknowledge of planned terror attacks and failed to notify the authorities, according to reports in the Israeli press. He was remanded for eight days May 16.

Levinger is the leader of settlers living in central Hebron. He began the movement which became the Gush Emunim in 1968 when he led a group of settlers in occupying an hotel in the city.

The detention of the settler-leader has deepened rifts in the settler movement. Meetings were held all week by various components of the Council for Jewish Settlement in the Occupied Territories. Settlers in the Bethlehem area Gush Ezion bloc have threatened to withdraw from the council if it fails to condemn terrorism. No condemnation has been forthcoming.

Pro- and anti-Levinger demonstrations by settlers were held outside the Moscobiyya detention centre in Jerusalem, where the rabbi is being held, May 16.

Gush Emunim leader Rabbi Moshe Levinger arrives for questioning at the Moscobiyya detention centre. His remand was extended for eight days by the Jerusalem magistrates court. Five other settlers were also brought to court, one of whom was also remanded 13 days.

The Arab College of Nursing in al-Bireh opened May 12 a scientific exhibition devoted primarily to the medical sciences. Many visiters attended the exhibit/ AO photo

Military Harass Student Outing

Israeli troops detained for one day 150 Bethlehem University students and prevented them from going on a recreational trip to the Golan Heights May 13.

Mousa Darwish, public relations director at the university, said students were turned back at a checkpost at the northern entrance to Bethlehem. Soldiers ordered them to head back to the military governorate. No reason was given for the decision. During the detention, one student, Ghassan Abd al-Hadi, was beaten up.

Darwish said the university administration contacted the authorities and inquired about the students. The authorities gave no reason for the measure but said they would be 'released soon.' The students were freed at 3:00 pm.

Darwish said that the trip was a recreational activity and that there was no reason to stop it.

Nidal Abu Zuluf, student council head, condemned the measure and pointed out that the authorities are interested in disrupting students' work and even recreational activities.

In other university news, the Bir Zeit University Student Council opened a Palestine Week festival and exhibit May 16. The exhibit contained books, national handicraft products and items made by prisoners. There is a cultural exhibit, newspaper exhibit and paintings. Plays and cultural forums will be presented throughout the week.

The Progressive Student Work Front, one of the main student blocs at the university which is not represented on the student council, criticised the student council's decision to hold the event without consulting them, according to *Al Mithaq* bi-weekly.

Books on Wheels

The Palestinian Counselling Centre will open a bookmobile project from June 1 in an effort "to raise Palestinian consciousness."

Farid Tawil, head of the executive committee of the counselling centre,told *Al Fajr* the aim of the project is to take books of educational and cultural value to Palestinian villages and refugee camps.

Tawil said centre employees will drive the bookmobile to remote areas in the occupied territories. Books will be read and destributed. At a later date the bookmobile will return to exchange books.

Conselling Centre officials appealed to individuals and institutions to donate books and funds for the project.

Funds for the bookmobile have been received from the Cyprus-based World Vision Organisation. Other donations are expected from the Middle East Council of Churches.

World Vision is a Christian organisation which presently funds a number of educational projects in the occupied territories.

The Palestinian Counselling Centre was founded in Jerusalem in 1983. In September 1983 the centre opened a public office in Wadi Joz.

continued from page 1

Guerrillas Killed

Military action against Israeli targets in Israel and in the West Bank and Gaza have increased significantly over the past two months. In addition to the three major operations in Jerusalem, Ashdod and Deir al-Balah, there were a number of less serious attacks, mostly with grenades and firebombs, in Khan Yunis, Qalqilya and Hebron. The latest case was the firebomb attack, May 10, on an Egged bus travelling through the Hebron district town of Halhoul, which caused material damage. (Translation: Local Press, May 16, 1984.)

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Stephen Green: "The Arab World Must Take Sides With Itself"

by Gassan Bishara
Our Washington,DC correspondent

There are no limits to US military and financial backing for Israel. But, says author Stephen Green, the Israelis gained American respect by challenging American Marines in Beirut. "It is time Arab governments begin to act the same way."

Stephen Green, the author of the recently published book *Taking Sides* about Israeli-American relations between 1948-1967, called on the Arab world to "take sides" with itself "to earn the respect of average Americans." Green was speaking at the National Convention of the National Association of Arab Americans (NAAA), held in Washington, DC May 3-6.

Green said that to earn the respect of "the average American who is our president, Arab governments are going to have to take a page from the Israeli book."

Green, an "internationally recognised authority on humanitarian relief," detailed facts about American-Israeli relations. He is critical of these relations and urges the Arabs to stand for their interests as the only way of getting American respect.

He blames Arab-American relations on "the underlying prejudice and ignorance which characterises the average American's view" of the Middle East.

As a model, Green quotes the bestseller *Exodus* by Leon Uris. Uris is wrong and the US public, media and intellectual circles have accepted his misfacts and errors.

Green said Uris' *Exodus* is "appalling," pointing out that "...blatant racism filled almost every paragraph." Uris describes Arabs as "dirty, lazy, cowardly and cruel," while "Jews of any type were honourable, strong courageous and kind."

Green concluded that *Exodus* is "racist smut... without any redeeming social value."

Green was no less critical of a new book by the same author, *The Haj*, describing it as "more racist."

Green said he was concentrating on Uris' books because they are being sold everywhere in the US and were put out by major American publishers. This, he said, is "a reflection of a moral blindspot in our country."

Green also talked about US financial and military aid to Israel which, he argues, is now being rationalised as aiming not to defeat the Arab world "or to protect Israel's security interests, but to protect the region from the Soviet Union. In other words, he said, there are no limits to US military and financial backing.

The US government, Green concluded, "has fully and finally taken sides" and "is simply no longer a trustworthy ally for any Arab state." The US will happily keep nothing from Israel."

Green said Arab-Americans, "should confront the racism and ignorance which distort US policy in the region of your homelands."

He noted, however, that there is nothing left for Arab-Americans to do to balance US Middle East policy. Much is left for Arab governments to do in order "to make this administration and the people of this country understand what we have given up by "taking sides." He suggested this be brought home to Americans and their government "not with words but actions."

He suggested boycotts of American industry and praised Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates for purchasing arms in Europe, rather than the US. He said when the US acts "in ways which compromise essential Arab national security interests, Arab governments are going to have to make the US feel pain."

The Israelis, he suggested, gained American respect by attacking the USS Liberty in 1967 and more recently when they challenged Marines in Beirut, in defence of what they defined as their national interests. The US, he argued, "quickly understood" Israel's message.

"Until Arab governments begin to do the same, I don't believe the American people or their government will be motivated to urgently and forcefully apply our influence in the region" to conclude a fair and negotiated settlement to the Middle East conflict. Arab governments taking a "page from the Israeli book" will also help "efforts to combat racism and ignorance" in the US, he said.

Green's speech struck a sensitive cord in the Arab-American audience's consciousness. He was repeatedly applauded during his short presentation and received a standing ovation when he finished.

RIYADH'S DUTIES

The statement by Prince Saud al-Faisal, Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister, to the Lebanese *Monday Morning* magazine, that "peace in the Middle East will be easier if the US does nothing in the region," indicates a new Saudi political line towards the US.

The Saudi minister expressed regret that US actions contradict its words. He also urged Washington to take a more even-handed policy in this region because its siding with Israel will cause the latter to reject all peace proposals.

Prince Faisal did well also when he expressed appreciation for the Soviet support to the Palestinian people and their cause, and for saying that his country will not forget that Soviet weapons helped the Arabs confront Israel.

As a result of this statement is on the Soviet level, Saudi Arabia should continue with efforts to increase contacts and establish diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, which the minister said "will come at the right time." Such diplomatic relations are the minimum in appreciation the USSR deserves for its honourable position towards the Palestinian issue, in particular, and the Arab world, in general.

At the US level. Saudi Arabia, which leads the Arab countries in what is considered the "moderate" line towards Washington, is urged after all these bitter experiences with a number of American administrations, to take more practical measures to undermine American interests in this region.

The words of the Saudi government should be converted into deeds. The Saudi position should not see contradictions between its words and acts as is the case with Washington.

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AL FAJR invites our readers to contribute letters, articles and opinions. Contributions must be signed, but names may be withheld upon request.

If You Wish - This Is Not a Tragedy

by Zvi Bar'el

Last Friday was one of those days it's possible to do without. The car didn't start and it became clear that a part needed replacing. I called my garage but they were celebrating the long weekend and did not reply. No choice; I ordered a taxi and went to the garage area in Wadi Joz, located in East Jerusalem.

On the way, the cabdriver asked me: "Why repair your car with Arabs? Go to a Jewish garage. You will pay a few more *lirot* [pre-shekel currency] but they will not do Arab work."

"And who, in your opinion, works in the Jewish garage?"

"Yes, you are right, only Arabs. But there is a Jewish boss who inspects and there is someone to complain to."

This conversation reminded me of Defence Minister Moshe Arens in an interview with Israel Radio in English a few days ago. Speaking about the Palestinian problem, he said it would not be a national tragedy for the Palestinians to live as a minority. As well as the sharp smell of paternalism in this well-oiled saying — that slips out smoothly as if it solves the Palestinian problem in a moment — there is, hiding behind it, a crystallised view of life that says:

The annexation of the [West] Bank Arabs is already behind us. This is the solution! They will live as a minority? It is not a national disaster.

Will the cabdriver be prepared to have his taxi repaired by an Arab mechanic?... Is minister Arens prepared to allow an Arab access to the government computer services?

To Arens' credit it should be said that it seems he is alone among his colleagues who is able to describe such a rigid life-view in an elegant phrase without hysterical intonations. He is also the only one who is prepared to speak about the Palestinians in national terms. However, it is exactly this respectable terminology which reveals the views of the defence minister on the Palestinian question. Such a world-view was already answered dozens of years ago by the Zionist leader Max Nordau in his article on the question of Jewish nationalism: "What is indeed the question of nationalism? This cannot be understood by one who lives in peace with their people as a citizen in the community and in a nationally united state which has never been a shamed for using its language or forced to alienate itself. Descriptions and stories cannot transmit the true anger and shame sensed by a person in such a situation. On such matters, only one who was born in a country in which his nationality is an oppressed minority can speak — [one whose] language is not the state language and is compelled to learn a foreign language. And only if you have sensed with your flesh and known the depth of the pain when you are deprived of your human rights in your own country and you are forced to cover yourself with dust and bend your head in face of the foreign nationality... There is no self-respecting person in the country who will freely accept such conditions.

Essentially, it would be possible to be satisfied by these phrases as a response to Arens' statement but the minister's words have two sides. He indeed directed his words to the Palestinian people for whom, supposedly, it will not be a tragedy to live as a minority; but what about us? Will the Israeli people be prepared to absorb such a large minority? A difficult question because while making the Palestinian people into a minority is an arbitrary matter depending on our power and will, the absorption of the Palestinians as a minority is another business which raises questions of another sort. Will the cabdriver be prepared to have his taxi repaired by an Arab mechanic? Will people be prepared to be treated by an Arab doctor? Is Minister Arens prepared to allow an Arab access to the government computer services? (Arab technicians employed by the military government are not entitled to enter the technical centre in Jerusalem.) Will a Bir Zeit University student, under Arens' doctrine, be able to use the services of the state archives for his research work? (Today they are prevented from doing that without authorisation from the 'civil administration' wing of the military government.)

These are only the practical questions, on the everyday level. These are the questions that will define whether there will be a national tragedy here and for whom: in our courtyards or the Palestinians' — or maybe both here and there?

One newspaper said this week that the Likud will make the occupied territories the central issue in the elections. Apparently, something along the lines of 'The Alignment Wants to Sell the [West] Bank to [King] Hussein or the PLO' — as if a Jewish national tragedy were hidden in this. However, at the same time Arens trys to sell to us the Palestinians as a minority in a paternal humane cover that says: 'It is not a national tragedy if they live as a minority.'

A segmented affair. Tiny. Because someone has national aspirations or a people cannot absorb a minority against the smooth engineered solution that is proposed? John Stuart Mill said about this: "There is no doubt that the ruthlessness of those who don't hear and don't see and know nothing about their subjects has much more chance of being worse than the ruthlessness of those who do."

Essentially, there is no need for John Stuart Mill. It is enough to travel to an Arab garage in Wadi Joz. (Translation: HaAretz, April 25, 1984.)

A Matter of Semantics

Dear Editor:

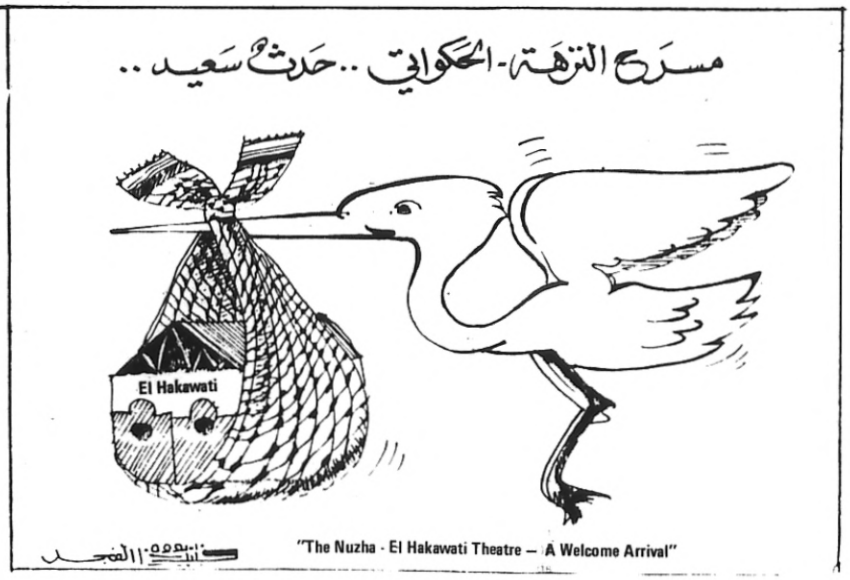
I am writing this letter to your paper in order that I may express my opinion on a letter from a Jackie Lubeck that you had published in your issue of March 28.

Jackie Lubeck seems to feel that the people of this country are "stewing in depression" and she feels that they should express more of their "joy" or "happiness."

Unlike Jackie Lubeck, I am of the belief that there are some very valid reasons behind the people's "depression" and I have therefore supplied a list of my own:

Abusive, adverse, agitating, ambivalent, arrogant, *apartheid*, baneful, barbaric, base, callous, deaf, dehumanising, effacement, genocidal, larceny, malevolence, narrow-minded, obduracy, paradoxical, sadistic, tenacious, unremitting, vengeful, wily, xenophobic and zealous. Now, people, let us look for "joy" and let us look for "happiness"!

S. Diament
Jerusalem



"The Nuzha - El Hakawati Theatre — A Welcome Arrival"

An anonymous article in HaAretz (May 4, 1984) traced the history of Israeli-perpetrated terror against Palestinians in the occupied territories back to 1972. What was called then an 'underground scarecrow' of 'counter-terror' has apparently gathered flesh in the interim.

Counter-Terror and Underground Scarecrows

From above clockwise: Aisheh Bahash, killed by Israeli settlers in Nablus; Hebrew graffiti in East Jerusalem reads "Death to Arab stone-throwers. There is no such thing as Palestine"; victim of Hebrew University attack lies in hospital; Yoel Lerner, Kach member connected to sabotage attempts on al-Aqsa and Amihai Paglin, arms smuggler for Kach. Present investigations of an Israeli underground come 12 years after the first revelations surfaced.

The terms 'counter-terror' — for acts by Jews against Arabs — and 'Jewish underground' were coined earlier than thought possible and, more precisely, abroad, where counter-terror gained unprecedented legitimisation in Jewish communities. The first Jewish terrorist attacks took place about a year before the outbreak of the October 1973 war and their threads always led to Rabbi Meir Kahane, leader of the Jewish Defence League, who used the bluntest expressions to prove the necessity of 'cruel counter-terror.'

The Amihai Paglin affair, the former campaign officer of the ETZEL [the pre-state of Israel terror group headed by Menachem Begin] who was accused of attempting to smuggle arms abroad for Kahane's JDL, was the first warning sign. It was also the first time that the police warned of the existence of a 'Jewish underground.'

Shlomo Hillel, a police minister in those days, expressed his fears about the subject. Shmuel Tamir, Paglin's lawyer [and later a justice minister in the first Begin government] totally rejected these terms. He explained them in a phrase that is ironic today: "It is impossible to explain... the artificial attempt to frighten the public with underground scarecrows except by the fact that the government is trying to draw attention from its recent failures in the fight against Arab terror" (*HaAretz*, September 29, 1972).

The Paglin affair had not yet calmed when a Parisian-Jewish terror group called 'Massada' planted explosives in the doorway of a Palestinian bookshop in Paris at the beginning of October 1972. Repeatedly 'Massada' plotted with the Betar [the Herut Party youth movement] organisation in France and again and again Herut and Betar spokespersons denied any connection between the two groups. This despite the fact that about three days after the damage in Paris, activists of Betar's New York branch stated their preparedness to 'hit back' for any terrorist act committed against Jews in the US. The world leadership of Betar sent an intensive denial to *HaAretz* although on the other hand Herut's activists in Britain declared that 'special revenge squads' would be set up to take revenge for acts of Arab organisations.

At a Herut activists conference in London in November 1972 where the matter was discussed there was talk about a 'sacred duty' and the need to 'stir up the wasps' nest.'

At the same time in Israel the PORI Institute conducted a poll on the subject of unofficial counter-terror. Of those questioned, 36.8 percent supported the need for counter-terror and it was sensed that even the government didn't publicly disagree.

Ze'ev Schiff, (*HaAretz*'s military commentator) quoted, on October 25, 1972, an Israeli source stating that it is worthwhile staging impressive deterrent acts "in order that the saboteurs will say that the Jews are... 'crazy' and they should be wary of them."

In June 1974 police arrested six men suspected of planning revenge after the attacks in Ma'alot, Kiryat Shemona and Shamir. They were released on bail. This was nothing but advance notice for the activity of another group that would make its voice heard from May 1975 to today — TNT or *Terror Neged [Against] Terror*. The first TNT attack arsoned an Arab bus in Wadi Joz in Jerusalem.

A month later, four group members were caught in the act of arsoning an Old City mosque. From then until now, the identity of the group calling itself TNT remained a mystery.

The attempt to assassinate the West Bank mayors on June 3, 1980 was the most spectacular of the attacks committed against Arabs in the occupied territories. The attack has served ever since as a symbol of the inability of the police and the government to discover those who commit Jewish terrorist acts and it was a constant source of presumptions about a silent conspiracy between the government and the underground allegedly organised in the occupied territories.

However, the attack on the mayors was only the tip of the iceberg. The first signs of an underground organisation of Jews in the occupied territories were known to the authorities three months earlier. The attack on the mayors was preceded, for instance, by a mini-*pogrom* executed with the best military precision in Halhoul (March 25, 1980). It was connected to key Kiryat Arba people. Indeed, the investigation was stopped, people were not questioned and two suspects who were arrested were released after a short while.

A month after the incident in Halhoul, squads committed a similar *pogrom* in al-Bireh. Even before the attack on the mayors' cars, over 100 kilogrammes of explosives stolen from an Israeli army store were found on the roof of the dormitory of the Wall *Yeshiva* in Jerusalem. The defendants acted — according to their testimony — out of 'love for *Eretz Israel*' and were granted relatively light punishments in the first instance, which were reduced further by the military court of appeals.

There is a lot of confusion about the name or names taken by those who committed the attacks from that period. Was it TNT? And who are the *Bnei Zion* (Sons of Zion) who claimed responsibility for the attacks on the mayors? Is the TNT that allegedly claimed responsibility for this attack the same one which threatened the life of television reporter Rafik Halabi? It is reasonable, then, to presume that there is no necessary connection between the attacks and those who later claimed responsibility for them?

The resignation of the Shin Bet [secret service] head — apparently connected with the investigation of the attack on the mayors — raised doubts about the honesty of the government's intentions to treat the matter of the Jewish underground [seriously]. The prime minister, according to *The Washington Star*, refused to permit the Shin Bet head to take all actions he thought worthwhile or necessary. The Shin Bet head made no explicit denial that he had reasonable suspicion of six Gush Emunim members, two of them from Beit El.

Another investigation that has not ended: in January 1981 an old Arab man from Hebron was caught by three Israelis. They beat him with the butts of their Uzis. When the old man was released from hospital he told the police that he could identify his attackers. The police announced that they were 'investigating' the affair. It seems that they have investigated ever since.

At the end of February 1982 TNT returned to action in East Jerusalem: it broke shopwindows, sabotaged cars, punctured tyres and wrote slogans. A false explosive device wrapped in a leaflet of the 'Groups of Village Leagues, Rabbi Kahane, Kiryat Arba and the Guardians of the Temple Mount' was found April 9, 1982 in the doorway of al-Aqsa Mosque. Other sabotage attempts on the *Haram* — in August of the same year — were connected to Yoel Lerner, a *Kach* (Kahane's Israeli version of the JDL, which is a political party that runs for the Knesset) member who organised a movement of 10 youths, male and female, to plant an explosive device near the Dome of the Rock.

The list of attacks that were not investigated in 1983 includes, among others, the explosion of the device near the al-Qazazin Mosque in Hebron (February 27) that happened — indeed accidentially? — three days after a call for revenge by Rabbi Levinger.

Three days after the attack on the mosque, a three-year old Arab girl in Hebron was wounded by what was described as a 'shooting festival' of Kiryat Arba residents.

On the same day there were also shots fired at Arabs in Yatta in the Hebron district. The police arrested four Israelis from Kiryat Arba. As far as it is known, no one was charged with the wounding of the girl nor the mosque explosion.

Two more events that have not been solved: on the day of the attempt to assassinate the mayors, a booby-trapped grenade exploded in Hebron hear a school. Three months earlier, another Israeli army booby-trapped grenade exploded during a football match in another Hebron school. Two boys were wounded.

On May 13, 1983 10 cars belonging to Hebron residents were attacked. A week earlier, unidentified people broke windows of eight cars in al-Bireh. On the same day a device exploded near Bidya's *mukhtar*. Village residents guessed that it was an act of revenge by settlers from Elkana D. It is still being investigated.

The bloody harvest of the exhibitionist terrorist attack on the Islamic College in Hebron July 26, 1983 was three dead and 28 wounded. Close to noon four armed men broke into the college courtyard, shot two students and threw an Israeli army grenade into the college building. The grenade hit another person and wounded 28. An investigation was opened. It has not ended so far.

From the beginning it was clear that the act was committed as a retaliation for the murder of Aharon Gross. The college president was promised that 'everything will be done in order to discover the criminals.' So far they have not been discovered.

On December 8, 1983 an 11-year-old Arab girl was murdered by shots apparently fired at youths who were suspected of stoning Israeli cars. The trail led the police to Elon Moreh settlement and three persons were arrested, suspected of murder or aiding and abetting murder. The capture of the eccentric messianic group in Lifta, following a series of attacks on Christian and Muslim institutions in the occupied territories and the investigation that is taking place now following the attempt to bomb eight Arab buses will perhaps clarify, about 12 years after the first talk of a Jewish underground in the country, whether it is indeed just talk of 'underground scarecrows,' as Shmuel Tamir said at the time. (Translation: HaAretz, May 4, 1984.)

The transfer of relatively small sums of 'Zionist' ransom money could have rescued Jewish people from concentration camps, according to Tamar Maroz and Reuven Padahtzur in *HaAretz* (April 29, 1984) writing on the Slovakia Affair.

A DEAL FOR LIVES THAT DIDN'T FIT THE ZIONIST SCHEME

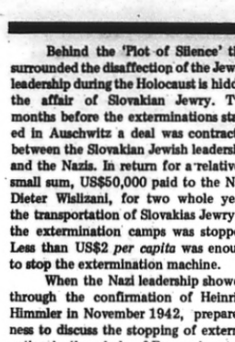
Behind the 'Plot of Silence' that surrounded the disaffection of the Jewish leadership during the Holocaust is hidden the affair of Slovakian Jewry. Two months before the exterminations started in Auschwitz a deal was contracted between the Slovakian Jewish leadership and the Nazis. In return for a relatively small sum, US$50,000 paid to the Nazi Dieter Wislizani, for two whole years the transportation of Slovakias Jewry to the extermination camps was stopped. Less than US$2 *per capita* was enough to stop the extermination machine.

When the Nazi leadership showed, through the confirmation of Heinrich Himmler in November 1942, preparedness to discuss the stopping of extermination in the whole of Europe in return for the payment of US$2 million (the 'Europe Plan'), desperate pleas were sent to the free world's Jewish leaders to send the money to save those who had not been exterminated yet.

Possibly the insensitivity, cynicism and apathy of the Jewish leadership let the chance to stop the extermination machine fall — not only in Slovakia but in the whole of Europe.

In spite of the fact that the 'Joint' [Zionist fundraising body] had during the war years US$64,376,000 in hand, the organisation's representatives refused to forward to Slovakia even the US$200,000 which the Nazis demanded as advance payment to stop the transports to the crematoria.

Today, 42 years after the Slovakia Affair, documents and details are published here for the first time connected with this deal, details that may defy the 'classical' claim of the Jewish establishment's historians (like Lisie Davidowitz and Yehuda Bauer) who state that "all the efforts of the Jewish people would anyway not have stopped the Nazi extermination machine."



Rabbi Michael Weissmandel

At the beginning of 1942 Dieter Wislizani, the Nazis' representative for Jewish affairs in Slovakia, informed the state's Jews that the Germans intended to resettle them in Poland. In the beginning 16,000 youths were sent. They were told that the buildings they would erect would 'absorb their families.' The buildings they erected became the infrastructure of the extermination camps of Auschwitz and Maidanek.

After construction of the buildings was completed in Auschwitz, "young men and women marched to the train enthusiastically, singing the *Hatikva* [the Zionist anthem]." Up to the end of 1942 58,000 out of 89,000 Jews in Slovakia had been sent to the extermination camps.

At the same time negotiations started in Bratislava, Slovakia's capital, between a young Orthodox rabbi and the Nazi officer Dieter Wislizani. Rabbi Dov Michael Weissmandel was a scholar and teacher in the *Nyitra Yeshiva* who occasionally travelled to Oxford to study ancient Jewish manuscripts in the Bodlean Library.

In his memoirs, Weissmandel speaks about the expulsion of Slovakian Jewry and adds: "And I was told by Dr Abels that a Jewish man was taken from an expulsion campaign by Wislizani in return for valuable items and I asked myself, if he takes bribes for an individual, why wouldn't he take for many?"

Weissmandel looked for a contact person with Wislizani. He found it in the person of Karl Hochberg, a Jew who was serving in Wislizani's office providing him with statistical data about Slovakian Jewry.

Weissmandel went to Hochberg and asked him to inform Wislizani that a "representative of world Jewry, 'Ferdinand Roth,' visited *incognito* in Bratislava and is prepared to open negotiations on ending the transports for money." Wislizani, like many other Nazis who were captured by the myth they had created themselves about the power of world Jewry, responded enthusiastically.

He didn't know that the 'Ferdinand Roth' who was negotiating with him was an imaginary creature made up by Rabbi Weissmandel. The pompous letterheads on which Roth's proposals were written were smuggled to Weissmandel at risk of death from pompous Swiss hotels. To Weissmandel's surprise Wislizani informed him within a few hours that he would be prepared to stop the expulsion of Slovakian Jewry for a payment of US$50,000. He even detailed conditions of the deal:

1. In order to prove his good will, Wislizani will halt the three next transports without any reward;

2. After 10 days he will get the first installment of US$25,000;

3. After the first installment, the transports will be stopped for seven weeks;

4. At the end of this period, the second installment of US$25,000 will be paid;

5. The money should come from Jewry abroad and evidence should be brought of this.

At this stage, Weissmandel was joined by Gizi Fleischmann, one of the leaders of the Women's International Zionist Organisation (WIZO) and the 'Joint' representative in Bratislava. Around them a secret committee was concentrated that was later known as the 'Working Group.'

The US$25,000 for the first installment was supplied by a Jewish money changer, a resident of Bratislava, Benjamin Stern. Stern was careful to iron the banknotes so that they would look as if they came from Switzerland. Wislizani kept to the agreement and following the forwarding of the sum, he stopped the transports for seven weeks.

Now the Working Group turned to the task of obtaining money for the second installment. A special messenger was sent to Switzerland to ask for help. The messenger was equipped with detailed letters addressed to 'Joint' representative Sally Mayer, to Nathan Schwalb, director of *HaHalutz* office [which trained colonists for kibbutzes in Palestine], the Jewish Agency in Geneva, and to the American Jewish leadership.

Sally Mayer replied that he was not prepared to give the money necessary for the second instalment. Mayer's arguments were:

1. Slovakia is a small state and US$50,000 is too big a sum for it;

2. American law prohibits forwarding money to hostile countries (the 'Joint' was an American organisation);

3. He didn't believe the tales about the hard life of those expelled to Poland "because this is the manner of the *Oestjuden* [Eastern Jews] — to exaggerate horror stories in order to squeeze money from donors."

When the seven weeks ended and they still didn't succeed in mobilising the money, Weissmandel asked Wislizani for an extension of six weeks, through which there were ardent endeavours to obtain the money, with no result.

Then Wislizani reintroduced the transports. Within two days 3000 Jews were kidnapped in towns and (compulsory) work camps and on *Yom Kippur*, September 21, 1942 they were sent to Auschwitz. Only then a special envoy arrived in Slovakia from Hungary with the US$25,000. Wislizani remarked dryly: "This is what miserable Jews are like. Until I pushed you to the wall, you didn't have the money."

From the day after *Yom Kippur* 1942 to the day after *Yom Kippur* 1944, two whole years, there was no more expulsion of Jews from Slovakia. Wislizani fulfilled his promise.

Now, after the success of the negotiations with Wislizani, Weissmandel elaborated a far-reaching plan — the salvation of the rest of European Jewry, about 1 million souls.

A month after the expulsions from Slovakia were stopped, Karl Hochberg was sent again to Wislizani with a letter from 'Ferdinand Roth': "Uncle is happy to hear little Willi passed the test in his school successfully and he sent him a gift. And if he continues this way through high school, he, the uncle, will take it upon himself (to supply) all his needs."

Weissmandel instructed Hochberg so that he would interpret the meaning of the hints in 'Roth's' letter to Wislizani. The regular school is Slovakia. The high school is all of Europe. The meaning of the letter is a proposal from world Jewry to stop the extermination of the Jews in Europe for a high payment.

Wislizani replied promptly that he was happy to hear about the proposal and went to Berlin to report it to Himmler, the second man in the Nazi hierarchy. When he returned he had with him the authority to negotiate the plan with the Jews. In the course of the negotiations, Wislizani submitted the main condition: US$2 million for the cessation of expulsions from European countries. This sum would be paid in installments. On receipt of the first installment, US$200,000 expulsions would be stopped for two months.

Today, following an examination of the archives and reading minutes of the meetings and discussions, it becomes clear that although the information about the Europe Plan was in the hands of the Jewish leadership in Jerusalem and in New York, the subject wasn't debated effectively.

While Weissmandel and Gizi Fleischmann unceasingly dispatched desperate letters in which they precisely described the genocide taking place and requested the money to stop it, the people of the Jewish Agency directorate were occupied with sterile discussions.

On December 23, 1942 Weissmandel wrote: "We don't understand how you can eat and drink, how you can sleep in your beds, how you can walk in the fields when the responsibility is upon you and for months we have screamed and you have not done yet anything... Our brotners, sons of Israel, have you gone mad? Don't you know in what a hell we are living? You have the money. What are you waiting for?"

During the same period, the Jewish Agency directorate had a conference in Jerusalem. There were a few subjects on the agenda. The minutes of the discussions contained one-and-half pages of the participants' views in the discussion of the extermination of European Jewry, while three pages were dedicated to the dispute about raising the cost-of-living allowances for Agency employees.

While Weissmandel screamed for help in his letters that "thousands of souls, tens and hundreds of thousands, are depending on the money," in a debate in Jerusalem Rabbi Shapira said: "The *Yishuv* [Zionist community in Palestine] should do something. A mourning day should be declared." Eliezer Kaplan, later finance minister of the state of Israel opposed him: "I object to a sabbatical. Hitler will be happy if we strike."

While the Agency directorate discussed whether to raise public opinion, Dr Senator remarked: "I have some doubts relating to press publicity. Why frighten even more relatives in the country?"

Weissmandel continued to stress his plea, becoming horrified faced with the wall of Jewish silence: "Jews who are being killed shout at you from their desperate hearts. You are cruel. You are murderers."

At the same time the Committee for the Salvation of Europe's Jewry convened in Jerusalem. In the course of the discussion, M Bader, *Hashomer Ha-Za'ir*'s [left Zionist] representative, said: "I wish to be specific on the 'well-known proposal' — negotiations with the 'chief oppressor.' We are hesitating as to whether to fulfill this demand or not."

In face of Bader's hesitation, Isaac Gruenbaum held a principled struggle against the use of 'Zionist money' for the sake of salvation: "Zionism comes first — this should be heard every time a big holocaust deviates us from our path of the salvation of Zion... and when I was asked, 'Could you give from the *Keren HaYesod* [Jewish Agency] money for the salvation of Jews in exile?' I said 'No!' And say again 'No!' "

Moshe Sharret, who received copies of Weissmandel's letters, sent to the Jews of occupied Europe, instead of money, an eight-page letter, full of rhetoric: "Maybe we didn't do enough, maybe we missed opportunities... However, the *Yishuv* is shocked to the depths of its heart with every new wave of horrifying news from the valley of death..."

A secret memorandum prepared by A Hartglass, later director general of the ministry of interior, was distributed among members of the Agency directorate. At the top of the memorandum was written: "Intended merely for Zionist elements; it should not be forwarded to non-Zionist bodies participating in the Salvation Committee." Among other things, it said: "I understand that raising the question in such a form bears in it a kind of cruelty; however, we must say that if we have the ability to save only 10,000 people — who would be beneficial for the construction of the country and for the revival of the people — and on the other hand we have 1 million Jews who would become a burden on us and at best be an apathetic element, we must restrain ourselves and save the 10,000 in spite of the complaints and pleas of the million... Therefore, we must to give up the [salvation] of the damaging element."

The 'Joint's' representatives in Switzerland, who had the money to pay for the Europe Plan, also refused to forward it to Slovakia.

On June 18, 1944 Sally Mayer wrote to Gizi Fleischmann that he "will make endeavours to obtain US$200,000 that will be kept in the US until the war ends, for the Germans."

With a broken heart, Gizi Fleischmann replied: "Do you indeed believe that I shall go to the Germans after 10 weeks and promise that they will have an US$200,000 advance payment in America after the war, but until then we are not able to give anything? Don't you think that he would think we are making fun of him?"

On August 27 1943 Wislizani informed the Working Group people about a turn for the worse in the attitude of his superiors in Berlin about the deal because of the delay in forwarding the money and on September 3 he informed them that his superiors had withdrawn their support for the Europe Plan.

Even then there was no guarantee that if the first installment of US$200,000 was paid, the extermination would be stopped, or for how long. However, it is virtually clear that Heinrich Himmler himself stood behind the Europe Plan. Himmler also gave his consent to the 'Small Plan' of stopping the expulsion of Slovakia's Jewry. In 1943 Himmler offered to meet in Spain the head of the 'Joint', Jospeh Schwartz, in order to negotiate an end to the extermination. A year later, in October 1944, Himmler ordered an end to the general extermination of Jews and his order was in force until the end of the war.

The fact that Himmler was behind the negotiations on the Nazi side increased the possibility that the Europe Plan could be realised.

We shall never know what indeed would have happened if the money had been forwarded to the Nazis but one fact is clear: for eight months a simple and concrete offer from the Nazis was circulating in Jerusalem and New York — an immediate stop to the murder of Jews. The Zionist movement's heads who dealt with holocaust issues ignored it.

Gizi Fleischmann was killed in the Auschwitz crematoria.

Weissmandel jumped out of the train carrying his family to Auschwitz. His wife and children remained in the wagon and got lost in the death camp. Afterwards, Weissmandel was involved in the famous negotiations that took place between Eichmann and Hungarian Jewry in 1944 — 'trucks for blood.' After the war, he emigrated to the US and there he was an extreme anti-Zionist. In 1957 Weissmandel died of a heart attack.

Karl Hochberg was tried at a field court martial by Slovakian partisans and was executed.

Wislizani was brought to court in Nuremberg. On his request, his trial was transferred to Bratislava where he was sentenced to death and hung. (HaAretz, April 29, 1984.)

The Slovakia Affair

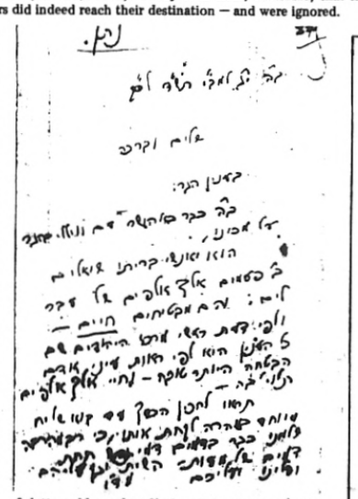
The Slovakia Affair seemed so fantastic that historians have so far tended to avoid it and instead related the stopping of the transports [of Jews to gas chambers] to the priorities of the Nazi death machine... and to the priorities determined by the number of German trains. However, we have found no contradiction between Weissmandel's words and the German documents... German documents, confirm the details of the story (Prof. Bauer in his book *The Holocaust, Historical Aspects* (Hebrew) p. 140).

New light is cast on the issue by Weissmandel's *From the Distress* and the recently published book *I Called Without Response*, by Avraham Pinchas, written on the basis of new archive material, following several years of study.

The unresearched part in the Slovakia Affair was the question of whether or not Weissmandel's and Fleischmann's letters reached [Jewish] settlement [in Palestine] leaders after they were forwarded to their representative in Geneva, Nathan Schwalb ([who later charged his name to] Dror). The material has so far been kept secret: "Some of the correspondence was kept by Nathan Schwalb but so far historians have not been permitted to study this material" (Professor [Walter] Laquer in his book *The Horrible Secret*, p. 42). Schwalb documents are published for the first time in this report. Among them are unknown letters handwritten by Weissmandel 'to Nathan' — like the one (see below) written in code about the 'Europe Plan': "Already the minister (Heinrich Himmler) has come with Willi (Wislizani)... he and his allies ask two times thousand of thousands (2 million) of overseas (US dollars) and they promise LIFE (emphasis in the original)."

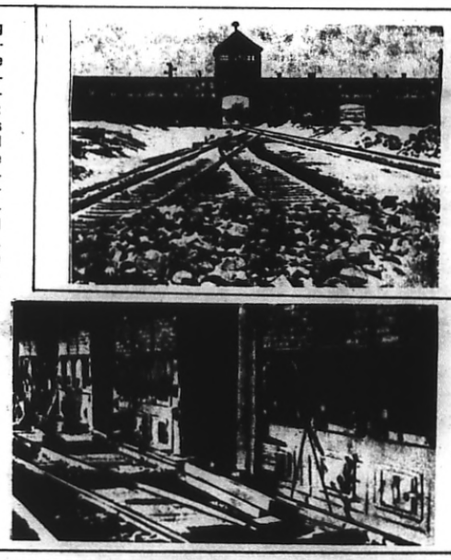
The cover letters attached by Schwalb also indicate that he noted the seriousness and urgency of the Europe Plan. Already in his letter of December 4, 1942, Schwalb reports to Jerusalem: "In Slovakia there is room to counter-act the expulsion order. The well-known advisor (Wislizani) is appointed as mediator for this and he has already shown his power at home (Slovakia). They say that now he will grow in rank and become the chief official for Southeast Europe (Greece and Hungary) and so far he has met his promises in full to the very end... (We) must respond to our contact people. [It is] unnecessary to tell you how much I anticipate your opinion."

Some copies of his letters together with Weissmandel's letters addressed to Moshe Sharret [later prime minister of the state of Israel] and to settlement leaders are kept in the Zionist Archives (File 26/1444S). Today it is clear, therefore, that the letters did indeed reach their destination — and were ignored.



A letter addressed to Nathan Schwalb from Rabbi Dov Michael Weissmandel describes, in code, progress on the 'Europe Plan' from the Nazis side. Zionist leaders received these pleas for money, and ignored them.

Train tracks leading into Auschwitz; crematoria inside the camp. Zionist leaders decided on politics over people: "Zionism comes first — this should be heard every time a big holocaust deviates us from our path of the salvation of Zion... and when I was asked, 'Could you give from the *Keren HaYesod* money for the salvation of Jews in exile?' I said 'No!' and say again 'No.' "



A Survivor Testifies

After the publication of the article in HaAretz Gershon Weller, an internationally known philosophy professor, wrote the following letter:

The following should be remarked on in the article of Maroz and Padahtzur, 'The Deal That Didn't Take Place.'

First, the lack of interest about everything which happened in Europe was clear to all of my contemporaries who arrived to this country at the same time. No one asked us about what had happened and no one cared about it.

Second, there is at least one person in this country (although it is reasonable that there are many like him) who considers it, at least, an insult to good taste to see the leaders of the state, the Zionist movement and the religious establishment standing silently at *Yad Vashem* [Israeli official memorial for holocaust victims] honouring *El Male Rahamim* (Merciful God). (Translation: HaAretz, May 9, 1984.)

Professor Gershon Weller
Rehovot

Five Palestians have been charged with the murder of an Israeli teenager in what Galilee residents say is a pre-trial conviction in an atmosphere of racist anti-Arab hatred. Yosef Masur comments for *Derech HaNitzotz* (April 1984).

Danny Katz: A Murder Case Turned Racist Campaign

From right: three Palestinians from Sakhnin and two from Haifa are accused of killing Danny Katz. On May 13 the defendants were brought to court and denied the charges for the second time, maintaining written confessions were extracted from them under duress.

The tragic murder of young Danny Katz, resident of Haifa, in December 1983, has turned into an affair with clearly racist anti-Arab characteristics in which high-ranking political elements are involved.

The nature of the investigation and tendentious articles in the media indicate that there is a directing hand using this case for political aims, unconnected with the exposure of the criminals and their being brought to court. A team of *Derech HaNitzotz* reporters visited the Galilee to trace the development of the affair, resulting in the following report:

On Sunday, December 11, 1983, a few days after the disappearance of Danny Katz, *Ma'ariv's* correspondent reported that a meeting took place in the office of Yehuda Solomon, commander of the Sakhnin police station, in the western Galilee. The meeting was attended also by Galilee regional commander Meir Sadeh, regional staff officers and... the *Ma'ariv* reporter himself. It is presumed that at the meeting, the detailed planning of an anti-Arab campaign began. The main channel for it became *Ma'ariv* newspaper, the owner of the 'scoop.'

On the same night Sadeh stated: "The solution of the murder will be explicitly a national challenge." Even before the corpse was found, [former chief of staff] Raphael Eitan and Yitzhak Hofi joined the 'sacred' project: the first, the Sabra and Shatila massacre chief of staff and the second, the Mossad head who developed the strong ties with the Phalangists, committers of the dreadful massacre. Even before finding the body these two visited the Katz family's house and strengthened Danny Katz's father's presumption that indeed, 'the crime was committed by Arab hands.'

On the same night the motives were defined: both hostile and sexual. Following these conclusions, the *Ma'ariv* reporter says the investigators marked out for themselves the suspected place — the Arab village of Sakhnin.

On the day the inciting report was published in *Ma'ariv*, we visited Sakhnin. About 15,000 inhabitants live in the 'suspect village.' It is a developed village with kindergartens, schools, shops, coffee houses and stone houses inhabited by *fallahin* and workers who commute daily to make a living for their families.

Sakhnin, located in *al-Batuf* valley, south of the Acre-Safad road, has deep roots in the Galilee's history, a long time before the establishment of the state of Israel. Today Sakhnin is surrounded by dozens of *mitzpim* (new outlook settlements) and settlements affiliated to the Misgav regional council, all of which were erected on Arab land belonging to *fallahin* from Sakhnin and other villages in the region. There was a hard struggle last year by the Arab village's population against the authorities' attempt to annex Sakhnin land [to the regional council — tr].

This is the background to a statement by Misgav council head Arik Raz, who jumped at the opportunity to slander and attack Sakhnin residents: "Jews and Arabs, we were living side by side; but it becomes clear that we were naive. We must immediately consider whether we were not simply complacent. I don't free from responsibility a public figure in Sakhnin."

In the village itself the prevailing feeling is that the police didn't act in this case to discover the criminals but acted to label the whole Arab population and to frighten the people of Sakhnin.

We were told by Fu'ad Ghanameh, spokesperson for the family of which two members were arrested as primary suspects in the cases: "For the police this is an opportunity to say, 'Here, after so many failures, we have succeeded.' The filthy atmosphere in the police is well-known — the same about the battles [between senior officers] within it. They wished to improve their image and looked for a convenient victim."

During discussions with him it becomes clear that the intentions [of the authorities] were wider: "There is an attempt to dispossess the Arabs in the Dania [Haifa quarter — tr] area and Tirat Carmel [a suburb of Haifa — tr]. The authorities' attitude and their intentions in Sakhnin are well-known. This is the only connection between the suspects from the Tirat Carmel area and the residents of Sakhnin." As much as this looks absurd, it seems that in 1984 Israel, prejudice is stronger than fact. Raphael Eitan's accusations that Arabs murdered Na'awah Elimelekh [in Bat Yam near Tel Aviv-Jaffa, a murder case that was not solved although parts of the girl's body were found on the beach] because of national drives [Eitan — still in office then — declared that the murder was committed by an Arab as an initiation test for a Palestinian group] were received only two years ago with mockery and contempt. Today the attitude towards this fascist racist is different: "We were angry at Raful [Eitan's nickname] but he was right," said a parent recently whose child disappeared under mysterious circumstances.

And all this before the investigation was completed and the trial not yet held. The press and the authorities had already convicted the Arab youths and created a lynch-mob atmosphere. The Arabs are described as sex-maniacs and hostile and the focus of hatred is directed to the triangle of villages — Sakhnin, Arrabeh and Deir Hanna, dubbed by the Israeli press 'the Iron Triangle,' which is overfilled, according to its claim, 'with extreme cells hostile to Israel.'

It is clear that in the course of the investigation there were more than 500 people arrested. Some of them were held for more than 30 days under a special order given by the legal advisor to the prime minister.

Fu'ad Ghanameh said that before the arrest of Samir Ghanameh, the police took his wife, his mother and his sister at 11:00 pm to the cave where the corpse of Danny Katz was found. There they pressed them to confess that Samir brought the corpse to the place with their help.

On March 18 Samir's wife was arrested for 48 hours. They threatened to rape her in front of her husband if she didn't confess that she saw him bringing the corpse to their house and that she helped him to take it to the cave.

According to the claim of the detainees' advocate, the accusation against them is based on a confession taken under pressure of maltreatment.

In his appearance before the Acre magistrates April 4, 1984 to discuss the extention of his detention, Fathi Mohammed Ghanameh claimed: "I didn't do anything and I know nothing. I confessed to the police only because they beat me with a stick and an iron [bar]. Last Wednesday they broke my teeth." The attending journalist reported about the broken teeth.

The arrested youths have no criminal records and they were not political activists. The attempt to burden them with accusations on nationalist-political grounds seems unbased. "We know who are our children are," we were told in Sakhnin. "These youths haven't belonged to any party, have never been arrested and there is no motive that could drive them to such a deed."

The investigation into the Danny Katz case has not yet been completed. The file has not been prepared, the trial didn't take place. However, it is clear today that those profiting most from the way the problem was treated are the Eitans and Sharons. In this case, justice, mutual respect and coexistence are trampled.

Fathi Ghanameh's brother is silent. His angry silence expresses the feelings of Sakhnin inhabitants and of the Arab population in Israel.

Fu'ad Ghanameh: "The police wished to improve their image and looked for a convenient victim."

Interview with Salim Wakim

Q: What do you have to say about the police's claims?

A: In the press conference the police held they claimed that there is evidence that connects my client with the murder. It was clear to me from a conversation with the suspects that this evidence is baseless. The accused claim that they were beaten and threatened and the confessions were taken from them under pressure.

Q: What about the reconstructions [of the crimes]?

A: The reconstructions were done with hesitation and fear, which undermines the very claim that they committed the crime. The reconstructions themselves were irrelevant. All the places where they were taken, like the place from where the boy was taken and the cave, were known to everybody.

Q: Why did you try to stop the press conference?

A: Because the investigation was not complete. The confessions are doubtful and not serious. There was a step here connected with an interest to create prejudice and to influence the court and the public. The police try here to find a respectable outlet and I hope we are not repeating here a Daniel Khanokh affair [an Israeli accused of murder who, after noisy accusations, was finally found not guilty and the police were found to have fabricated the case].

Q: What about the motive?

A: The motive is not known. The police didn't say anything in this respect in the press conference. There is a conscious attempt here to blow matters up. A propaganda campaign is underway which is irrelevant to the investigation. In my opinion, it is not accidental that this campaign takes place before the Day of the Land [March 30]. (Translation: Derech HaNitzotz, April 1984.)

PALESTINE AND LITERATURE

The Writer – Fighter: Symposium on Literature and the Siege of Beirut

On March 8, 1984, five writers and poets took part in a symposium on literature after the 1982 invasion of Lebanon, held in *al-Ikhwah* (Brothers) Club in Haifa. The symposium was attended by several hundred people from the city and the Karmel villages. One of the participants, Antoine Shalhat, reviewed the special characteristics of Palestinian literature after the savage siege imposed by the invading Israeli forces on Beirut. Another participant, Emile Touma, talked about the changes in the Palestinian literature — prose and verse. Writer Salman Natour discussed how this literature was reflected in *al-Jadid* magazine. He also talked about his personal experience in writing about the war.

Short story writer Mohammed Ali Taha discussed the poems of Galilee artists Mahmoud Darwish and Samih al-Qassem. Finally, Samih al-Qassem himself talked about his personal experience in poetry. He also recited excerpts from a poem by Palestinian nationalist poet Mu'in Bseiso entitled 'Have you Begun Counting Your Ribs?'

Antoine Shalhat
'When the Writer is Also a Fighter'

Shalhat praised the writer-fighter in Lebanon during the Israeli siege there. "The steadfastness of the Palestinian revolution in the face of the mighty invading army with its massive machine of destruction was a victory for the Palestinian and Lebanese people," said Shalhat.

He emphasised that the idea and experience of freedom has not been fully exhausted in Palestinian literature. "Wherever the Palestinians lived after leaving Beirut, they are still facing the reality of dispersion." Shalhat cites the cry of the Palestinian writer, Yahya Yakhlaf, who says, "How are we to write, fight and move from one place to the other? I have become exhausted as a result of this constant chase. I want to take a breath anew."

Shalhat paused during his speech, at two important points: the role of the Palestinian writer during the war in Beirut and the idea that the Beirut siege was a test for the national Palestinian culture.

Palestinian novelist Rashad Abu Shawar says: "I went to Beirut as a literary writer with some aspirations and personal fame. I left Beirut fully realising a new fact was within me which would affect the nature of my writing. I wondered: 'Why?' Then came the reply: 'I have come to know real writing in a situation where I was both a writer and a fighter.' "

Less than two weeks after the start of the Israeli invasion, the writers and journalists met several times in the foreign office of the Palestinian Writers and Journalists' Union. They decided to participate in the battle both by carrying arms and conducting an informational campaign. They also decided to issue a daily newspaper to raise the morale of the fighters. They agreed to publish it under the name of *Al Ma'rakah* (The Battle) with the slogan 'Glory to the Resistance.' The first issue was published on June 22, 1982 carrying a front-page headline reading, 'No Alternative to Steadfastness and Fighting.' The editorial 'How to Lift the Siege' described the suffocating atmosphere of the siege. It read as follows: "Beruit is besieged from outside by Israeli tanks, a psychological war and total official Arab paralysis."

The option of *Al Ma'rakah*, through steadfastness and encounter, was the only means to move the Arab giant which stretched between the coasts of two oceans. "This is our only choice: to hold on and fight in Beirut, which seems to be the last stronghold so far. This way we can lift the siege from Beirut and unleash the outrage of the millions," wrote the newspaper.

Shalhat stated that the mere publication of the first issue of *Al Ma'rakah* was proof that writers and journalists were not afraid of anyone and that their lives are offered as everyone else's for the sake of defending their existence and the expulsion of the invaders.

Emile Touma
'The War Dictated a Documentary Literature'

The Palestinian writer-historian Emile Touma outlined the main characteristics of Palestinian literature during the post-Lebanon war era. He said, "The existence of a small Palestinian Arab community in Israel and the continued existence of part of the Palestinian people on the West Bank and Gaza, the existence of Palestinian communities in Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria and the dispersion of the Palestinians throughout the Arab world and the diaspora... and the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza by Israel in 1967 and the continuous genocide by the Israeli rulers against this people... all these combined created diverse objective conditions that dictated, and inspired, the Palestinian writers in the choice of various forms and implications to express their tangible suffering in their works.

"The Palestinian literature has to a great extent rid itself of the feeling of limbo. It has maintained the nostalgia of the Palestinian people for its homeland, symbolised by olives, oranges and grapes," said Touma.

Prior to the June 1982 war, the Palestinian novelist Rashad Abu Shawar described the Palestinian reality as follows: "It is a reality of exile, displacement and constant movement between borders. It is hunger in the camps, travel to the faraway Gulf states... It is hard work and perseverance and the creation of a fate that is quite the opposite of what the enemy had expected."

Abu Shawar went on to describe the suffering of his generation: "Afterwards our generation came. A generation that has experienced the bitterness of exile and suffered from its horrors. Nevertheless, it continued to write, produce and try to give something new."

Novelist Afnan al-Qassem described this inferno differently: "I am being chased by the land, chased by the cause. The land is chasing me and I am chasing it. This chase takes on different shapes. A small news item from the occupied territories might be transformed into an epic in my imagination."

The writer Liyanah Badr describes her suffering as a woman and as a Palestinian. She writes about the experience of the Palestinian woman who cleanses herself of the deposits of dependence, incapability and despair.

Liyanah Badr said: "I looked around and beheld the old woman who mothered a *fedayee* [freedom-fighter], the young woman who was not contented with being the wife of a *fedayee* but rushed forward to various fields of work... singing her fighting role and realising her human efficiency."

Badr, who was displaced three times in thirty years, assumes that writing has become freedom and that freedom is the first value that fights oppression.

Touma noted the importance of documentary writing during the June 1982 war. Some of the documentary literature by Palestinian writers was published in *Testimonies from the Battlefield*, by the General Union of Palestinian Writers and Journalists. Among the contributors were Mahmoud Darwish, Mu'in Bseiso (died in February 1984), Dr Izz al-Din al-Manasrah, Rashad Abu Shawar, Hanna Muqbil (assassinated in April 1984), Abd al-Qadir Yasin Rifa'iyyah and Leila Sayegh.

Touma says that the titles of the writings of those writers tell the story of the Palestinian steadfastness in Beirut:

Let's Keep Their Names, Love and People
Al-Fakhani's Flowers
The Orchard of Steadfastness
They Arrest the Call for Prayer
Women, Women, Women
A Girl from Haifa
The Lover of the Launcher

Touma says that every passage in *Testimonies from the Battlefield* shows a human fighting, painting, narrating the deeds of those who defied the fierce Israeli military machine while, at the same time, maintaining humanity and aspirations. Through that they overcame despair, emptiness and frustration.

In the book, Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish expressed his suffering in a passage entitled 'When Poetry Falls Silent For a While.' He said in reply to the question... "When do you, as a poet, write during the war?"... "I write down my silence because the roar of guns is louder... I shall resume writing when the guns fall silent for a little while. Then my silence bursts out into all these voices and I find the right language."

Touma concludes by saying that the truly revolutionary writers did not wait until the end of the battle to write. Therefore, we should not judge the Palesfinian Arab literature through academic lenses or according to fictional criteria that pretends to preoccupy itself with the event rather than with solving it.

Salman Natour
'Writing Within the Experience and Away From It'

Salman Natour, on his personal experience of writing during the war said, "The war started after the blockade of the Golan (February 1982). In short, I was placed under house arrest. I did not come out with you to the streets to protest in a way that is more violent than violence. I didn't visit the scores of the wounded in the hospitals. During my house arrest, nothing was left to me except imagining how the crime was being committed and writing about it in 'Tales under the Dust of Battle.' This time the hero of my tales is not the victim but the killer. He says:

'The purity of arms? O.K.

'Who said we murder children?

'What is the difference between a five-year-old child carrying a bazooka and a forty-year-old man carrying a bazooka, too?' "

In a dialogue published in *al-Jadid* magazine early in 1983, Yasir Arafat told the late poet Mu'in Bseiso, "When I thought of an emblem for the Palestinian revolution and asked the artist Isma'il Shammout to design it, I thought of no one other than a poet. For this reason, the revolution bestowed the emblem for the first time upon two poets and an artist rather than upon two military heroes. This is the honour of the revolution."

This means, says Salman, "a bias towards the words and not towards bullets by the one who carries the gun." Natour wonders: "Are we, who lived out this siege, sometimes in the streets demonstrating and shouting but more often in living rooms watching colour TV on a velvety sofa, while cracking nuts or burning America by smoking Marlboro and Kent cigarettes, and abusing the world... are we expected to produce impressive, artistic and truthful literature about the siege?"

Natour goes on to say: "However skillful we are in portraying the event and however open our imagination might be and however advanced we, as artistic tools, could be, we cannot be as powerful as the cry of the mother who found her nine children slain in Sabra and Shatila."

Natour adds: "I do not feel any embarrassment before my kinsmen in Sabra and Shatila because I did not write about their split blood and the mutilated bodies of their children, to be impressive and truthful. For I, as a human being and a writer, can only cry, demonstrate and be torn for them. Then I can write about my own conflict, my own shouting and not about their conflict and shouting."

Mohammed Ali Taha
'The Sea Journey and the Desert Journey'

Mahmoud Ali Taha wrote about the neo-Palestinian-Greek mythology: "Odysseus ibn Galil ibn Karmel ibn Negev al-Akki al-Yafi al-Gazi al-Maqdesi migrated to the land of the cedar... known on the map as Lebanon."

The Beirut experience forced the writers to look for new writing. Mahmoud Darwish says, "I witnessed the same ship that transported Odysseus carry one of his descendants in the twentieth century. It returned from the East Mediterranean to its origins in Crete... the first harbour."

Samih al-Qassem in his poem 'The Desert' mounted a camel that carried him very far away in *ar-Rub al-Khali* (the Empty Quarter) invoking *ash-Shanfara* and *Aba Dhar al-Ghafari*.

"Where art thou, *Rub al-Khali*
"Your days, O Arabs, are desert,
Lacking water and fertility."

Samih al-Qassem
'I Couldn't Save Myself Except Through Writing'

Samih casts a quick look at the main characteristics of Palestinian poetry since the 1948 setback. Following the 1982 war in Lebanon, he comes to this conclusion: "The poem has become a kind of underground explosion that is measured and recorded by the most sophisticated of devices. Poetry, it seems to me from the prominent examples, is charged with an unprecedented amount of grief and pride."

During the siege of Beirut and the terrible shelling and bombardment, al-Qassem could save his 'self' only by writing. "I have written amazing quantities throughout the massacre on the Lebanese soil. I published *A Report From the Front, The Last Man, After Doomsday, The Siege, Alienation* and the poems 'Collective Endurance,' *'Qatr al-Nada'* (The Dripping of the Dew), and *'Sarbiyat al-Sahra'* (The Mirage of the Desert). (Translation: Al Jadid, April 1984.) (Abridged by Said al-Ghazali.)

WINDOW ON THE ARAB PRESS

Unquestionable Rights

The clear confirmation of the Arab position towards the Palestinian issue and the Arab-Israeli conflict, issued by Chadli Quleibi, secretary-general of the Arab League, in response to a statement by Yitzhak Shamir, Israel's prime minister, that Israel is "ready to negotiate with any Arab country on the Palestinians" proves that the Arab countries would not have joined the fight against Israel if it were not for the Palestinian question and that the Palestinian people have a right that cannot be ignored, at least on the Arab level — self-determination and the establishment of their independent state.

Quleibi's statement was a response to something that there is no question about; that the Arab countries cannot reach a settlement with Israel as long as the latter does not recognise the rights of the Palestinian people and as long as it continues to reject talks with representatives of the Palestinian people.

As a result, and to have a real peace in this region, Israel should introduce radical changes on its hardline position towards the Palestinian issue and can start by recognising the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

AL FAJR
May 11

The International Conference

The idea of an international conference under the auspices of the UN to discuss the Middle East issue is gaining more support, especially after the Palestinian leadership started emphasising this idea. Support for it came from China, Syria and Jordan, in just one week.

This idea, agreed upon by the Palestine National Council when it welcomed the Soviet President Brezhnev's proposal for an international conference, seems to be the best available proposal for a peaceful settlement in this region. To give the power to the international community, represented in the UN, to find a settlement means ending the US monopoly over it, which Israel and some Arab countries attempted to impose since 1973.

Since Israel and the US have already expressed their rejection of such a conference, efforts should be concentrated now on Europe to pressure the European community to support the idea of an international conference. If Britain is showing hostile signs, France seems to be qualified to play a leading role, particularly since it is the one which came up with a joint plan with Egypt for this region's crisis.

Diplomatic efforts, coupled with increased efforts to change the balance of power by reinforcing Arab resources, are the most urgent mission at this stage.

AL SHA'AB
May 14

Setting Our House in Order

The postponement of the second round of reconciliation talks between the major Palestinian organisations will not help efforts to reorganise the Palestinian house in order to break the ice around the crisis in this region.

Whatever the reasons and factors, declared or not, which led to the postponement, general interest and responsibility demand an immediate convening of the meetings to overcome the remaining difficulties and prepare for the 17th session of the Palestine National Council.

External pressures should not be allowed to influence the positions of the Palestinian parties. The PLO's relationship with Syria, for example, in spite of its importance, remains secondary as long as the Palestinian organisations stay committed to their people's cause. This commitment should also be put into action, not only in words and slogans.

The Palestinian delegates meeting in Algiers should not make the issue of the convening of the PNC an excuse for unending arguments over what comes first — resolving all the disputes or calling for a session of the PNC. If there were good intentions towards the cause, the PNC would be able to hold its meeting and reach solutions for the disputed problems.

The Algiers meetings should reach decisive results and should not postpone any issue for a third meeting.

AL QUDS
May 15

The Moroccan Regime

The Morocco of King Hassan II hosted in the past few days the so-called conference for Moroccan Jews. Israel was officially represented by political movements like Tami, which is headed by Aharon Abuhatzera, who in turn invited the Moroccan king to visit Israel.

Abuhatzera made it clear that the invitation to Hassan was political when he said that because of King Hassan's current position among the Arabs, he is the only one who can visit Israel to start an Arab-Jewish dialogue for permanent peace in the Middle East. It is true this is not the first time for such a relationship between the Moroccan monarch and the Israelis in his hometown. But it is the first time King Hassan has made such contacts public.

The first day of the conference in Morocco passed without any Arab reaction. Some circles, including Palestinians, even almost praised the conference and called for similar ones.

As for Syria, it withdrew its ambassador in Rabat in retaliation against what King Hassan had done.

We never were fooled by the reactionary role of King Hassan or any other Arab leader, in spite of their nationalist and religious covers. But we demand that this regime be exposed and that all contacts and relations with it be severed similar to the way Egypt was treated.

We believe that this regime was always ready to make such a move. But Yasir Arafat's recent deviations and the strong relationship between the two men, especially in what has to do with the Jerusalem Committee and chairing the Islamic Conference, gave the Moroccan regime strong incentive to make such a move.

In every way, what the Egyptian regime has done will be repeated by the Moroccan king and whoever is like them.

AL MITHAQ
May 16

The Heart of the People

Our commitment to national unity, based on the correct foundation of joint Arab-Jewish struggle for democracy, equality and just peace, is a firm commitment. Difficult experiences have proved that there is no other way that brings our people together except unity.

The Democratic Front for Peace and Equality, which ran in many elections, particularly the Knesset elections in 1977 and 1981 and the recent elections for local governments, is a manifestation of this commitment and is a broad framework for all nationalists, meeting the legitimate demands of every nationalist institution and individual.

The formation of the Front was a turning point in the struggle of the forces of democracy, equality and peace in Israel, particularly in the history of the struggle of the Palestinian Arab people in Israel. It also positively influenced the journey of the Palestinian people towards unity in the occupied territories and outside. The time when the regime used to deal with the masses in a superior way and treat them as minorities, ignoring their presence, is gone forever.

The formation of the Front pulled the carpet from under the ruling circles in Israel, which always felt like Israel Koenig about doing away with the democratic and progressive role of the Arabs. This was intended to create an "ethnic Arab ghetto to make it easy to deal with," as appeared in the Koenig report, or the creation of an "Arab lobby," as the Jordanian television keeps on repeating.

We consider the awareness of the Arab circles of this trap and reject the notion of establishing an 'Arab party' or 'Arab list,' as proof of the activities of the Front and of its influence on this crucial issue.

However, we should not imagine that the regime has surrendered to the Front and to its influences in this area. The enemy is actually increasing its plots as it is being defeated. We respect the argument by many nationalists and progressives who advised us on introducing some changes in the Front's list for the coming Knesset elections. However, this does not change the reality that the enemy imagined that it can take away from the Front one of its gains from among the Jews, MK Charlie Biton.

We have realised from the beginning that there are plots against us to cut us off from future gains. This policy, however, is not new. The ruling circles have always tried to separate the masses from their closest friends and best experience — the Communists.

The Arab people had to go through the 1948 war and a long period of living in Israel to realise the hypocrisy of the ruling party — that it will change its policy towards the Arabs and treat them better in a degree equal to their departure away from the Communists. Many people with good intentions had to pay dearly for believing this policy. The Front was established as a result of this sad experience. The recent municipal elections that led to the failure of these groups who wanted to take our people back to the time of tragedies proved that this people is great in its awareness and in its refusal to forget its past.

We assumed all the nationalists and progressives learned something from the defeat of the other groups in Nazareth. Therefore, it was difficult for us to imagine how much time the Zionist media gave to 'news' and 'predictions' on attempts to create an 'Arab list' or 'Jewish-Arab list' to run in the coming elections under the platform of 'progress' and 'Israeli-Palestinian peace,' without the Communists and outside the Front. In other

The members of this list should realise that they will only be taking votes away from the Front by being outside the Front. Whatever they say or do about their closeness to the Front, their attempt will divide the ranks and cause our loss of votes, as well as losing an opportunity to earn more gains for the Front and for the just cause that the Front united itself for.

In this issue we publish a position by the Executive Committee of the PLO expressing support for the Front. We have also published another report which appeared in *Filastin al-Thawra* on the same issue. This is a responsible nationalist position and nothing else should be considered.

It is difficult for us to imagine at the same time that there are individuals in the PLO, as appeared in *al-Majalleh*, that allow themselves to depart from the line of the PLO and spread deadly rumours among some Arabs in Israel who are not yet experienced enough.

Nothing will do other than unity among Arab and Jewish progressives. Unity is not only a slogan but also a framework and a policy.

AL ITTIHAD
May 16

Sa'ad al-Din Alami (far right), head of the Supreme Islamic Council, at a May 16 press conference to protest Israeli armed presence at al-Aqsa Mosque. Alami charged that the border guards have acted in a manner offensive to the sanctity of the holy site.

SIC Wants Troops Out of al-Aqsa

Head of the Supreme Islamic Council (SIC) Sa'ad al-Din Alami told Palestinian, foreign and Israeli journalists May 16 that the SIC will take "all necessary procedures and implement effective steps" to force the Israeli authorities to withdraw the recently posted Israeli soldiers and border guards from al-Aqsa Mosque.

Alami stated, "In principle the SIC is against the presence of armed Israeli soldiers in the sacred mosque as it is offensive.

"Soldiers and border guards have behaved in a manner inconsistent with the sanctity of the mosque. They harass women and urinate in public," Alami said.

Alami, who was speaking in a press conference convened at his office inside the mosque May 16, said he is completely against the presence of soldiers inside al-Aqsa walls. He said he does not oppose the presence of unarmed policemen outside the gates of the mosque.

In his press release Alami said, "Following the recent criminal attempt against al-Aqsa Mosque and under the pretext of security, Israel allows armed border police and soldiers to occupy the mosque thus desecrating its sanctity and violating Muslims' rights and sensitivities." Soldiers have been present since April 18.

On May 13 Alami sent an appeal to Perez de Cuellar, Secretary General of the United Nations in New York, to use his good offices with Israeli authorities to have all armed police promptly withdrawn from the sites of the mosque.

Three days before, a letter was sent to the Israeli minister of defence. The SIC received no reply.

Charities Discuss Child Problems

A conference on the conditions of the Palestinian child, held in Jerusalem May 13, concluded that the absence of an independent Palestinian state deprives the society of a comprehensive plan which could improve and develop the status of children. The three-day convention, the third annual meeting on social work topics, was attended by West Bank and Gaza Strip doctors, researchers, scholars and members of charitable societies.

Dr Amin Khatib, head of the Union of Charitable Societies in the West Bank, told *Al Fajr* that the convention studied the conditions of the Palestinian child in villages, camps and towns and examined the best means to improve conditions. Attendants drafted recommendations proposing more kindergartens in camps, villages and towns of the occupied territories, furnishing toys and educational equipment for them, training men and women pre-school teachers and unifying educational programmes, which reflect the child's conditions and environment.

Khatib said he is also planning to standardise uniforms for children in the kindergartens. He said that some Palestinian writers will also make efforts to write stories reflecting Palestinian realities for children. Khatib noted that six months ago a teacher training centre was established and a children's toy library was started at the Jerusalem office of the Union of Charitable Societies.

Among the lectures prepared by specialists were: 'The Health of the Palestinian Arab Child,' by Dr Muhayyeg Khallafeh, 'Factors in Language Development in Children,' by Yasir Mallah and Omar Attary, 'Childrens' Games and the Psychology of Play,' by Jaqueline Sfeer and Wafa Sa'adah, 'An Evaluation Study of Pre-School Education Conditions,' by Ahmad Fahim, 'The Effect of Cultural Heritage and News Media on the Child,' by Abd al-Latif Barghouthi, and 'Environmental Challenges Facing the Palestinian Arab Child,' by Thiab Ayoush.

In the opening ceremony, which took place at the *Nuzha al-Hakawati* Theatre, 15 distinguised social workers were honoured. Children participated in dances and skits before a packed audience of Palestinian dignitaries and a number of diplomats.

Traffic to Beir Nabala village is hampered by bad road conditions caused by water drainage from a nearby Israeli concrete factory/ AO photo

Protest Starts Early for War Anniversary

About 200 Parents Against Silence (PAS) demonstrators began a protest-vigil May 8 in front of the defence ministry in Tel Aviv. It will continue to the end of the month, to mark the end of the second year of the war in Lebanon.

A delegation delivered a letter to the defence minister, Moshe Arens, through a ministry spokesperson. Nahman Shai, who received the letter, promised the parents that they will receive a response.

The parents informed Shai of their intentions to hold a protest vigil throughout the month and will send protest letters to the defence minister on a daily basis.

Among the demonstrators was Israeli author Sami Michael, who said, "We have paid too high a price in no-choice wars to take on wars of choice. If there is a new war with Syria, if planes will roar and a new generation of young people will pay with their lives in foreign fields — the guilt will be totally upon the architects of the war in Lebanon. This war is breeding a new war, more horrible than the present one. Lebanon has become a laboratory of death and we should not be the midwife to bring to the world another monstrous war."

Ehud Spiegel, from Ramat Gan, the brother of Yoav Spiegel who died in Lebanon, declared that he demands a government committee to investigate war crimes in Lebanon.

Rahel Aharoni, a representative of PAS, said, "Twenty-four months are a long and horrible time that might turn the war in Lebanon into a commonplace. Memory is short and a commonplace is greater than reason... if we do not take upon ourselves the right of appeal, if we get used to the presence of our children in a country not ours, then our silence will be interpreted as consent." The silent demonstration ended with patriotic songs. Daily vigil will be held until May 31, between 2:00 and 5:00 pm in front of the Tel Aviv headquarters of the defence ministry. (Translation: Al Hamishmar, May 9, 1984.)

Settlers Raise Penalty for Stone-Throwing

The military government recently published an order making stone-throwing in the occupied territories punishable by up to 20 years in jail.

People throwing stones at a moving car can expect a maximum punishment of 20 years. Throwing stones at people or property bears a maximum penalty of 10 years.

An *Al Hamishmar* correspondent commented that the increased penalties for stone-throwing was decided when the defence ministry accepted settlers' claims that stone-throwing is equivalent to attempted murder. (Translation: Al Hamishamr, April 6, 1984)

CALENDER OF EVENTS

May 18, 1984

KUFR KANNA — National song festival, sponsored by *Abna' al-Balad*, afternoon and evening (Arabic).

May 18-19, 1984

JERUSALEM — *1001 Nights of a Stone-Thrower* at the *Nuzha al-Hakawati* Theatre: IS500 — adults, IS400 — students, 7:00 pm, (02) 288189 (Arabic, English translations).

May 16-23, 1984

BIR ZEIT UNIVERSITY — Palestine Culture Week, featuring cultural, newspaper and painting exhibitions, as well as plays and cultural forums.

WEEKLY REVIEW

May 8, 1984

BIR ZEIT STUDENTS RELEASED

BIR ZEIT — Six Bir Zeit students were released after one month in Fara'a prison. The students were arrested following anti-Israeli activities on campus. Ten other students were earlier released after undergoing interrogation for 18 days.

May 9, 1984

BOMB IN AL-BIREH

RAMALLAH — A bomb was found near the vegetable market in al-Bireh but safely detonated by the police.

YOUTHS JAILED

JERUSALEM — Gaza military court sentenced Na'im Maqdesi to five months in prison and one year suspended plus a fine of IS40,000 on charges of membership in a Palestinian organisation.

Ramallah military court sentenced Izzat Abdullah Abd al-Rahman, from Jalazon camp, to six months in prison and three years suspended sentence on security charges.

In Jenin, a military court gave a 15-month prison term to Abdullah Zakarneh, Imad Souqieh and Hussam Ahwal on charges of demonstrating. They were also given 19-month suspended sentences.

BETHLEHEM ELECTS STUDENT COUNCIL

BETHLEHEM — The Student Front bloc won eight of the nine seats of the Bethlehem University Student Council. The ninth seat was won by a member of the Youth Movement bloc.

The Student Front is made up of the Progressive Student Work Front, the United bloc and the National Unity bloc.

Jabra Shoumali will be the new president of the council. Huda Sharif will be vice president, Mohammed Manasreh secretary and Tawfiq Muheisan the treasurer.

RENEWED EXPORT TARIFF

TEL AVIV — The Israeli military renewed the tariff on West Bank vegetable products exported to Jordan. It was cancelled several months ago.

May 10, 1984

ISRAELIS BUY LAND ALREADY SOLD

JERUSALEM — Israelis who bought land in Jib discovered the same land had already been sold to many others. The Israelis will file a court suit against the three Jib residents who made the sale.

ARMS DISCOVERED IN RAMALLAH

TEL AVIV — An arms cache allegedly made up of 170 Soviet-made hand grenades was reportedly discovered in Ramallah recently, Israel Radio said.

SURVEYORS ATTACKED

Three Israeli surveyors were attacked by two Palestinian landowners as they measured land near Qalqilya. The injuries required hospitalisation.

HEAVY TAX ON TULKARM MERCHANT

TULKARM — A Tulkarm merchant, Adnan Minawi, was ordered by Israeli tax officials to pay JD3600 in back taxes after allegedly not keeping proper accounts.

TIREH STUDENTS STRIKE

TIREH — Students at Tireh Women's College struck in protest against attempts to force them to sign papers accepting the comprehensive exams. The students said they oppose sitting for these exams and do not want to have anything to do with them.

NEW ANSAR TOTAL

BEIRUT — A Red Cross spokesperson said in Beirut yesterday that in the middle of April there were 440 prisoners in Israel's Ansar prison camp in south Lebanon. The spokesperson said this figure is 60 up on the March figure. He said most of the prisoners he visited were placed at Ansar Camp II, built near the old Ansar prison.

MOLOTOV BOMB IN HEBRON

JERUSALEM — Palestinian sources said a Molotov cocktail was thrown at an Israeli bus near Hebron. No damage was reported.

May 11, 1984

QALQILYA STORE TAXED

QALQILYA — Qalqilya storekeeper Mustafa Hiblawi was ordered to pay IS6 million in taxes under the pretext he did not pay taxes in 1976 when he was working as a salesman.

Hiblawi refused to pay and as a result was held for 24 hours at Nablus police station. He was only released after he agreed to pay IS1 million as a down payment.

Members of the Shurouq School for the Blind (above) perform a play May 10 at their Beit Hanina school. Below, a guide at the Armenian School in the Old City of Jerusalem shows visiters one of the exhibits at this week's Armenian ceramics show /AO photos

May 13, 1984

THREE YEARS IN JAIL

RAMALLAH — Israeli military court in Ramallah sentenced Abd al-Aziz Ghaleb Karajeh, 21, from Safah to three years in prison and two years suspended on charges of membership in an Palestinian organisation and planning military operations.

FORUM ON UNIONS

DHEISHEH — The Dheisheh refugee camp Youth Committee for Social Work held a forum on union work in the occupied territories. Shehadeh Minawi, chairman of one of the two workers federations, and Ghassan Ayoub, member of the executive committee of the fed :ation, participated.

NEW TOWN ARREST ORDER

Israeli authorities imposed a town arrest order for the fourth time on Khalil Mohammed Sus from Dura. Under the order Sus, former chairman of the student council in the Polytechnic Institute in Hebron, cannot leave Dura for six months, effective from Ar il 24.

.AELI BULLDOZERS IN SILWAD

Israeli bulldozers started levelling large areas in Silwad to expand Ofra settlement. Residents of the village are seeking court intervention to stop the bulldozers from working on their lands.

AN ARAB-JEWISH BLOC

The formation of an Arab-Jewish electoral bloc was announced in Nazareth. Mohammed Mi'ari, head of the Prisoners Friends Committee, and Matti Peled, a reserve general, are heading the bloc. Its proposed electoral programme contains a call for establishing an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel and granting the Arabs in Israel complete equal rights.

TRANSFER OF TWO CORPSES

Israeli authorities transferred the bodies of two of the four young Palestinians killed in the bus hijack operation from their graves in Deir al-Balah to Abu Kbir for autopsy. Israel Radio reported that the investigation committee, headed by reserve general Me'ir Zorea, ordered the transfer for further investigation into the circumstances of their deaths.

ARRESTED FOR PLO GRAFFITI

According to *Ma'ariv* the Israeli police arrested two 14-year-old students from Fassouta school in western Galilee on charges of 'insulting the Israeli flag.'

The police accuse the students of writing the letters 'PLO' on two flags put in their classroom.

May 14, 1984

DESTROYING LANDS IN JIB

JIB — Israeli bulldozers recently started leveling 10 dunums in Jib. The land is owned by Abdullah Suleiman Khalifeh who refused compensation despite being threatened by a land broker. The land is planted with olive trees.

PRISONERS WANT TO SIT FOR TAWJIHI EXAM

GAZA — Families of detainees in Gaza central prison appealed to the International Committee of the Red Cross and other local and international organisations to pressure Israeli authorities to permit 62 imprisoned students to take secondary school exams.

KOLLEK EVICTS BOOK STALL

JERUSALEM — The Kollek municipality ordered the removal of a book stall in Damascus gate. The stand, owned by Azmi Hashlamoun, has recently been used to sell vegetables and fruits.

THREE STUDENT BUSES HIJACKED

BETHLEHEM — Israeli authorities hijacked three buses of students on a trip from Bethlehem University. The students were released at 8:00 pm.

CAR ARSONED IN AZZA CAMP

BETHLEHEM — Unidentified people set fire to a car belonging to Suleiman Darwish from Azza refugee camp.

JAILED FOR CONTACTS

Ramallah military court sentenced Draz Hajaileh, from Jericho, to two years in prison, 18 months of which are suspended, on charges of contacting an illegal organisation.

WAQF APPEALS TO OUST SOLDIERS

JERUSALEM — Sheikh Sa'ad al-Din al-Alami, head of the Supreme Islamic Council, sent a telegramme to the UN secretary-general appealing for interference in helping him obtain the withdrawal of the border patrol guards stationed in al-Aqsa Mosque.

STUDENT STILL MISSING

WEST BANK — Efforts are still being made to find Majdi Hassan Bada, a senior student in engineering at Najah University, Nablus. Bada disappeared six weeks ago.

May 15, 1984

STONING ISRAELI VEHICLES

Israeli vehicles were stoned in Ramallah and al-Bireh on the 36th anniversary of the establishment of the Israeli state. Studies in the Ramallah area were halted.

SIX MONTHS SENTENCE

The military court in Nablus sentenced Said Mohammed Shinawi to six months and 24 months suspended on suspicion of membership in a Palestinian organisation.

Local figures (above) attend opening ceremonies of a conference on the conditions of the Palestinian child, sponsored by the Union of Charitable Societies in the West Bank May 13. Below, popular Palestinian singer Mustafa al-Kurd performs May 11 at the *Nuzha al-Hakawati* theatre in Jerusalem /AO photos

OBJECTION TO LAND GRAB

Abd al-Fattah Hussein Jubeh filed an objection with the military objections committee in Ramallah against the confiscation of 75 dunums of his and in Dura.

LAND GRAB ORDER REVERSED

NABLUS — The legal advisor of the Israeli military governorate in the West Bank decided to return 500 dunums of land confiscated from landowners in the villages of Sawyeh and al-Liban.

NABLUS ENGINEER SENTENCED

NABLUS — The Israeli military court in Nablus sentenced Tawfiq Mohammed Nasser to one year imprisonment and three years suspended. Nasser was arrested at the Damyah bridge on his return from studies in Britain and was tried on membership charges.

Tawfiq was an active member of the British Palestine Solidarity Campaign in Swansea, where he studied.

ZONING PLAN HARMFUL

BEIT SAHOUR — A committee of Beit Sahour engineers held a meeting at the municipality to discuss harmful implications of the zoning plan prepared by the military authorities.

Bethlehem area municipality had earlier presented an objection to the zoning plan on behalf of the residents to the Israeli authorities.

May 16, 1984

BZU PALESTINE CULTURAL WEEK

The Bir Zeit University Student Council began Palestine Cultural Week on the campus of the university. The week includes book exhibitions, national industries, prisoners' handcraft works, journalism, folklore and heritage symposiums, play performances and festivals.

Hakawati-Lead Grilled on New Centre

Israeli police arrested a Palestinian theatre director, Francois Abu Salem, May 14 and questioned him for two hours before releasing him.

Abu Salem, director of *Nuzha al Hakawati* theatre group and one of the founders of the newly established *Nuzha al-Hakawati* theatre in Jerusalem, was picked at the theatre in the early afternoon and taken to the Moscobiyya detention centre for interrogation.

Abu Salem said he refused to answer any of the interrogators' questions without his lawyer present. He told *Al Fajr* that the police were asking "provocative political questions." Later police released him on condition he return the next day with his attorney.

Then the police changed their line of questioning, according to Abu Salem. "They asked questions relating to the license of the new theatre," trying to discredit their validity, he said. Abu Salem was then released.

All scheduled events of the theatre have continued unaffected. *Nuzha-al Hakawati* presented *1001 Nights of a Stone Thrower* to a packed crowd May 12, the Ramallah Friends Girls School presented a play entitled *Clowns* May 13 and Haifa poet Samih al-Qassem presented an evening of poetry May 14.

The *Nuzha-al-Hakawati* theatre is the first Palestinian theatre and art centre in the occupied territories. It was officially opened to the public on May 9.

It is officially registered as a non-profit organisation and its premises have met all the requirements of fire, health and municipal conditions, members of the board said.

Calender of Events

WHAT'S MISSING? WHAT'S HAPPENING!

Visitors and locals buy *Al Fajr* Jerusalem Palestinian Weekly for news of the occupied territories. Many important and enjoyable events pass by unnoticed simply because there are no avenues of advertisement available to announce them. *Al Fajr* will change this by offering FREE advertisement space to groups, institutions and individuals who want to let people know what's happening.

Ads must be no more than 25 words in length and be at *Al Fajr* English offices no later than Wednesday each week to be published the following Friday.

Phalangists Operate in Israel from Jerusalem

The Jerusalem Hilton Hotel (above), home of the Lebanese Forces, military wing of the Phalangists. Bashir Gemayel, assassinated in 1982, and his father Pierre, Phalangist party head, in front of the Beirut headquarters. "A permanent relationship with Israel."

by Attallah Najjar

It is an open secret that the Lebanese Forces — the military arm of the Phalangists — have opened an office in the Hilton Hotel in Jerusalem. But if one calls the hotel and asks for the 'Phalangists' office,' one gets the firm answer: "There is no such office here."

If one is persistent, the operator admits that they have no Phalangist office... but they do have permanent Phalangist guests. Asked about the semantic distinctions, operator replies, "These are our instructions, sir."

Some three months ago, Pierre Yazbak, the representative of the Lebanese Forces in Israel, opened a temporary office in a suite at the Jerusalem Hilton, one of the biggest hotels in the city, prior to moving to a permanent office. The hotel is only a few dozen metres from the Knesset, from the headquarters of the Israeli government and from some ministries.

"As for President Gemayel, since the cancellation of the agreement with Israel, he is sliding towards Syria. It is a very serious slide that will cause the disappearance of all Lebanon. We will never sever relations with Israel, even at the request of the Lebanese government."

—Pierre Yazbak

Prior to the opening of the temporary office, Yazbak visited Israel several times and met with high-ranking officials to finalise the preparations for the opening of the permanent office. Both parties agreed to open the office until space is readied at its permanent location in the 'Magiddo,' building also close to the Knesset and the government's headquarters.

Pierre Yazbak, who is in his early 40s, seems confident. "The Lebanese Forces decided to open an office in Jerusalem before the May 17 agreement was cancelled. The purpose of the office is to unveil the relations between Israel and the Christians in Lebanon, and to raise these relations to a new level. So far this relationship was on a governmental level and we want it to be a relationship between two peoples.

"Such a relationship could not, then, be kept secret, so we decided to open the office. The Israelis have come to know the Lebanese through war only. The suffering that accompanied the war crystallised Israeli public opinion towards the Lebanese. We want this relationship to be permanent and durable."

Yazbak admits that pressure on the Lebanese government and President Amin Gemayel, in particular, on the eve of the cancellation of the May 17 agreement, was one of the reasons that led the Lebanese Forces and its commander, Fadi Afram, to expedite the opening of the office. "The opening of the office is a Christian decision aiming at the maintenance of the independence of Christian decision-making. It may be viewed as part of the Lebanese Forces' objection to the decisions of the Lebanese state and the approach of President Gemayel. When he decided to follow the road to Damascus, we decided to take the road to Tel Aviv," said Yazbak.

"This office," Yazbak continued, "represents the Lebanese Forces and Christian economic and social institutions. They could be said to have one thing in common: the rejection of the present approach of President Gemayel. The office also represents independent trends, in addition to the National Council, the heads of economic, union and industrial enterprises. In brief, the office represents the broader base of the Christians. This is a hint that Gemayel represents a minority of the Christians."

Yazbak added, "True, I represent the Christians. But I am for harmony among the minorities in the area — the Christians, the Jews and the Druze. We need harmony with Israel, just as Israel needs us. We need Israel on a short-term basis, whereas it needs us on a long-term basis."

Yazbak knows what he wants from Israel. But he doesn't know exactly what he can offer. He suggests the establishment of a strong Christian-Druze zone, "to face the Iranian tide advancing through Damascus and the Beqa'a to Israel." He demands Israel use its influence with the leadership of the Druze community to open a dialogue between Druze and Christians.

The Shi'ites, Yazbak predicts, will in the future unite with the Muslims to return to south Lebanon.

Yazbak adamantly refuses to reveal any information whatsoever about his meetings with Israeli officials prior to his coming to Israel. But he adds confidently that he has contacts with government officials and non-officials as well as with representatives of the opposition. He even has contacts with the dignitaries of the Druze community in Israel. "All doors are open to me," he boasts.

"My activities are not limited to the political level; they cover the cultural, social and academic levels so as to deepen understanding between the Israeli and Christian communities," he points out. Scholarships have been exchanged, Lebanese films have been shown in Israel, the Lebanese Library has opened in Jerusalem. The office also deals with trade matters. In the near future, eight new employees, including cultural and commercial attaches, will be appointed.

Chief Israeli negotiator David Kimche signs the May 17, 1983 agreement between Israeland Lebanon. "The Lebanese Forces decided to open an office in Jerusalem before the agreement was cancelled. The purpose of the office is to unveil the relations between Israel and the Christians in Lebanon, and to raise these relations to a new level."

Asked what would happen if President Gemayel requested the closure of the office, Yazbak replied, "There is no relationship between us and President Gemayel. We would refuse such a request."

Israel and the Phalangists share many visions about the future of Lebanon. Yazbak does not believe in the reunification of the country, or rather he does not want such unity. According to him, the only solution is a federation of communal cantons.

Yazbak says, "coexistence among the various Lebanese communities is a dream that has come too late. A dream that vanished a long time ago. We are only obliged to live next to one another and to choose between dialogue or war."

The Lebanese Forces are angry with the outcome of the Lausanne conference, which set the basis for national reconciliation. "We," says Yazbak, "reject the return of Syrian influence to Lebanon. Therefore, we do not recognise the conference. We object to it and view it as a futile attempt that will lead nowhere. It only brings Lebanon back to 1943.

"We ask Israel to bring the parties to the conflict in Lebanon to the negotiating table and to be the arbitrator. Israel enjoys great credibility with both the Druze and the Christians."

Yazbak is equally scathing about newly-appointed Premier Rashid Karameh. "No one in Lebanon will ever forget that Karameh paralysed the army in 1975 and perpetrated the crisis since then. Since then he has been on good terms with Syria, which decided to reward him now by asking him to form the government.

"As for President Gemayel, since the cancellation of the agreement with Israel he is sliding towards Syria. It is a very serious slide that will cause the disappearance of all Lebanon. The appointment of Karameh as prime minister means the increase of the pressure on the Lebanese Forces to sever relations with Israel. But this we will not consider. We have started this task with no intention to stop it, even at the request of the Lebanese government. We are the Lebanese opposition now. We call upon the Israeli government not to cut relations with us. We are sure that our office will contribute to the normalisation of social and economic relations with Israel."

Yazbak believes that Syria will ask the Phalangists to cut their relations with Israel. Relations between the Phalangists and Israel date back to 1975. They were suspended — formally — by Bashir Gemayel in 1981 at the request of Syria. Yazbak fears that the next Syrian request will be firmer and that Lebanon's powerful neighbour will not turn a blind eye, as it did in the past.

Meanwhile, Yazbak is settling into his luxurious quarters. His only problem, he says, is soaring prices. He has asked for permission to bring furniture and other equimpment for the new office from Lebanon on a special ship.